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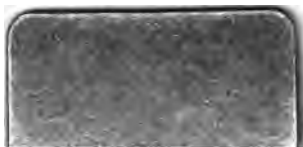
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BEATRICE;

OR,



THE UNKNOWN RELATIVES.

BY CATHERINE SINCLAIR,

AUTHOR OF

"MODERN ACCOMPLISHMENTS," "HOLIDAY HOUSE," "SIR EDWARD GRAHAM,"
"JANE BOUVERIE," "THE JOURNEY OF LIFE," ETC.

"If authors must write, they had better compose
Their stories too marvellous almost for prose;
Add some incidents, too, which are strange above measure."

Bath Guide.

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BEATRICE.

CHAPTER I.

"They sought her baith in bow'r and ha',
The lady was not seen."—SCOTT.

"Alack, now, that all the world should be out sight-
seeing and saint-making, and we laid up here, like two
lame jackdaws in a belfry!"—*Saints' Tragedy.*

NIGHT and morning Lady Edith was determining to set off with Beatrice from the cold and stately halls of Eaglescairn to their own little peaceful warm-hearted home, but night and morning found her yet a most unwilling prisoner in the gloomy Castle of Eaglescairn, where the cold, proud, tranquil incivility of its hostess became every day more intolerably galling to one like Lady Edith, who lived but for the exchange of kind affections and friendly good offices. She had now learned so to distrust Mr. Ambrose that she would not even have had an honest-hearted quarrel with him about his clandestine conduct respecting Beatrice. One morning Lady Edith found a note from him dropped

accidentally on the floor, which enclosed her young *protégée* the loan of a relic, to be placed under her pillow. It was a finger bone of St. Alphonso Liguori, preserved in a purple velvet bag, richly embroidered with pearls, and also a fragment of the coal used to burn St. Lorenzo. Mr. Ambrose in his note informed Beatrice, that "when St. Francis of the Reformed Franciscan order was attacked once by violent rheumatic pains, which daily increased until the physicians pronounced that he had not long to survive, he had placed this relic on his breast, saying,—‘If thou, Liguori, art really in heaven, deliver me from this death;’* and as soon as he had spoken these words he fell into a calm sleep, and awoke perfectly cured." Mr. Ambrose, in his note, proceeded to intimate, that if Beatrice recovered from her present illness, she must consider it a special miracle worked by this precious relic, and, in gratitude to his Church, dedicate her remaining days to its service; as a preliminary to which he requested, almost in a tone of command, that she would receive his visits daily for the discussion of affairs to which he need not more particularly advert.

"My dear Aunt Edith," said Beatrice, after she received this strange note from her benefactress, "can there be rational persons, born and educated like ourselves, who are enticed into a Church where such trash is seriously taught, and such men are actually canonized? No wonder that Romanism has been called the parent of atheism."

* Liguori's Life, p. 54.

"In the early Church," replied Lady Edith, "men were called saints on the same principle on which every clergyman is now 'The Reverend,' and every Bishop 'Right Reverend,' whether appropriate to their actual characters or not. Such saints as are described in old popish books are mere nonentities of the imagination—mere wild chimeras of a heated brain; and when devotees are expected to believe their miracles as devoutly as those of Holy Scripture, their whole faith is generally thrown overboard, and they become infidels."

"Lady Eaglescairn read me lately, with enthusiastic delight, her favourite passage from the 'Flowerets of St. Francis,' by Cardinal Bonaventure, which might, as Lord Iona remarked, have outdone the Arabian Nights," continued Beatrice: "it asserted that the birds hung motionless in the air, or rested upon the boughs, to hear the Saint's words, and would not depart until they received his benediction."

"How perfectly credible!" said Lady Edith ironically; "and when St. Pacificus, who was canonized by a Cardinal in 1839, walked abroad, neither rain nor snow fell upon him, nor were his feet ever touched or soiled by the mud upon the roads, while his companions were obliged to change their habits, drenched by rain that had fallen during their journey. Beatrice, my very dear girl, it is well for us to fortify our minds by a timely study of the end to which Romanism leads, for once beguiled within the vortex of that strange whirlpool, there seem no limits to the infatuation that



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conveyed home without danger of cold. To her great perplexity, her hostess, generally cold and dignified as a statue, looked much confused when she spoke; and there followed such an interchange of curtsies and civilities between the two ladies, as had never taken place before, though it all ended in Lady Eaglescairn politely regretting to say that her chariot had been sent to the pier, five miles off, in the morning, where a foreign lady of distinction and her suite were expected that day to land. "But," she added, eagerly, returning to her employment of drawing plans for encaustic tiles, "if you will accept the pony-carriage for yourself immediately, Lady Edith, I promise to bring our dear invalid to Heatherbrae to-morrow, should she wish to leave us."

At this moment, Father Eustace entered, with his usual long, stealthy step, his head bent down, and his wonted expression of dismal solemnity; while he glided into a chair, with a diffident, hesitating, cautious glance, as if he expected it would be snatched from under him. Lady Edith could not but think he would have been a perfect study for any good actor representing the Tartuffe,—or, rather, he seemed to her like a jester performing sanctity in burlesque; and yet there was a deep, sharp, inquisitorial expression in his eye, when for a moment he raised it from the ground, where that eye in general remained immovably cast down beneath the half-closed lid. Lady Edith shrank from the priest as she would have done from the sting of a serpent; and there was a curious con-

trast, certainly, now between his affected humility and his boundless authority in that old castle; while he evidently had a dreadful pleasure in the exercise of his extraordinary genius for intrigue, and in considering all around him as mere puppets to be wound up, or wound down, at his own supreme will.

Something in the tone and manner of Lady Eaglescairn boded, to the quick ear of Lady Edith, no good. Her hostess could not stand being face to face and eye to eye with her, but appeared to veil some concealed, evasive meaning in all she said—except one meaning, which was plain enough—that her guest was expected to depart, on that day, alone. To leave Beatrice behind for a single hour was out of the question; therefore Lady Edith at once politely intimated her fixed resolution to wait until Beatrice could be ready to move, even if she had to wait a week longer.

Father Eustace shot a glance at Lady Eaglescairn of warning or admonition, while he turned over the rustling sheets of a newspaper, as if absorbed in politics; and Lady Eaglescairn, looking much perplexed at this claim on her hospitality, remained silent.

There was a quiet firmness and dignity in Lady Edith's manner, very superior to the mere fineladyism of Lady Eaglescairn, who looked anxiously at Father Eustace, and his eyes remained on the ground. At length, Lady Eaglescairn, after having appeared for some time intent on matching a thread of crimson Berlin wool, felt obliged to say some-

thing, and exclaimed, "What a misfortune it is not to have more carriages! I am quite grieved, Lady Edith!—Where are my gloves?—I am quite vexed and annoyed. Have you got the "Morning Post," Father Eustace?"

It became perfectly obvious that no close carriage was to be forthcoming that day for the conveyance of Beatrice; therefore Lady Edith, politely repeating her hope that next morning they might be kindly favoured with the use of one, rose, with her usual quiet grace of manner, and slowly withdrew.

As Lady Edith opened the door, she was surprised, and almost startled, to meet Mr. Clinton entering Lady Eaglescairn's boudoir. He carried in his hand a box of metallic colours, and a large portfolio, containing sheets of glass, on which Father Eustace was teaching him and Lady Eaglescairn to paint some legendary subject for an eastern window to be placed in his own little chapel. By means of these lessons, and the planning of encaustic tiles, Lady Eaglescairn had found an outlet for all her spare time and thoughts; while, with Mr. Clinton and Father Eustace, she pored over the lives of Romish saints, in search of subjects for her brush. While Father Eustace taught his zealous pupils to copy missals and brasses, and to study all the mysteries of rubrical or legendary antiquity, he talked, with sententious learning, of rood-screens, stone-altars, albs, copes, tunicles, eagles, ambos, and lecterns, till their minds were in a whirl, like any kaleidoscope.

"A lip of lies, a face form'd to conceal,
And without feeling, mock at all who feel ;
With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown,
A cheek of parchment and an eye of stone."— *Byron*.

Lady Eaglescairn's carriage stood before the gateway next morning, at the hour appointed by Lady Edith ; and all her own baggage had been placed there, but Lord Eaglescairn's servants appeared most unaccountably to have overlooked that of Beatrice, which stood ready packed in her room. Miss Farinelli had actively arranged it all herself early in the morning, in the full anticipation of going home ; but, nevertheless, Lady Edith observed a tremulous hurry in her manner, and a burning hectic on her cheek, which unmistakeably indicated an extraordinary degree of suppressed agitation. Beatrice was, if that had been possible, more than usually affectionate in manner to her anxiously observant benefactress, who, nevertheless, fancied that she traced in the tone of her voice an almost compassionate melancholy, which amazed and perplexed her. Their whole intercourse now gave Lady Edith a vague feeling of apprehension, as if Beatrice knew of some great but inevitable misfortune about to befall them both ; and yet how could it be ! Though Lady Edith had not forgotten the remark of Junius, that a priest's resentment is implacable, yet she apprehended nothing from Father Eustace ; and in the whole wide circuit of her conjectures, could imagine nothing sufficiently agitating to account for the perfect agony of tenderness with which Beatrice had embraced

her when they met in the morning, and which still thrilled in her voice, as well as spoke in her tearful eyes.

"When we get home," thought Lady Edith, cheerfully, "no mysteries are acted there: all is free and open as Heaven's own light. Those who have stolen from me the confidence of my own child here, cannot follow me there. Lady Eaglescairn must see, from what I said yesterday, that priestly intriguers need expect no admission to my little home of simple habits, and of simple, unadorned faith,—a home of peace, without manœuvres, mysteries, or cabals, where life passes according to the plainest dictates of nature and of Divine grace."

Lady Edith had been impatient to set off during some time, waiting for Beatrice, when it suddenly struck her as very surprising what could be thus delaying her usually punctual companion, who had been evidently anxious herself to escape as early as possible from Eaglescairn Castle. Finding from her watch that it was already long after the hour, and her own impatience making it seem double the time, Lady Edith threaded her way through the long passages to Beatrice's apartment, whom she had so little doubt of finding there, that she spoke while opening the door—but Lady Edith's words seemed to come back as an empty echo. No one was there, and though the baggage of Beatrice was packed, it lay untouched on the floor.

When Lady Edith stood alone in the vacant

room, a sense of unaccountable apprehension suddenly came over her. Why was Beatrice absent so long, and where had she gone? Dr. McIndre had thought it almost too great a risk of fatigue if she ventured down stairs at all, and had with the greatest hesitation consented that she should attempt the drive to Heatherbrae. That she had left her room, therefore, without Lady Edith was surprising, and still more so that she remained long absent. Beatrice had jestingly said that very morning, in pronouncing a jocular panegyric on herself, that if all the time she had ever in her life kept anybody waiting were thrown together it would not make ten minutes, and here she was keeping Lady Eaglescairn's carriage at the door nearly an hour.

Lady Edith sat anxiously down to watch for the return of Beatrice, who must, she thought, be detained in the grand exclusive boudoir of Lady Eaglescairn, there to take a more friendly leave than in the drawing-room would be vouchsafed to herself. Lady Eaglescairn was a great giver of small presents, and Lady Edith saw before her mind's eye the little painted paper cutter or card-board work-box she would probably give as a mark of everlasting friendship and patronage to Beatrice, after having elaborately displayed to her all the splendours of her own magnificent jewel-box. Lady Edith amusing her weariness thus with an imaginary sketch of Lady Eaglescairn's pompous farewell, seated herself almost absently in the window of her own room, gazing at the

chapel. Every window now glittered in the golden tints of a noon-day sun, and the long row of massy cedars which led up to the porch cast a grand and solemn shade, "a dim religious light" over the beautiful building. A little bell, that scarcely sounded louder than a sheep-bell, tinkled in the breeze—that cruel bell which had before summoned her to the same unfortunate window from which she had seen Allan supported to chapel; and now Lady Edith glanced around, when suddenly her almost incredulous eyes fell upon the figure of Beatrice, walking feebly along the same path, towards the same chapel, and leaning for support on the arm of Mr. Ambrose, while Father Eustace followed with Lord Eaglescairn, now supposed to be convalescent, though a corpse could scarcely have looked less alive than he.

Lady Edith sprung from her seat in an agony of astonishment and alarm. Any burst of sudden emotion was most unusual to her, but now in an irresistible paroxysm of perplexity she clasped her hands together, while the whole blood of her body seemed rushing up into her face and throat. Scarcely pausing to see the procession, which was joined by Lady Eaglescairn, enter by the vestry door, Lady Edith was in a moment on their track. She almost flew to overtake the party, but in vain, and when she reached the gate it had been closed in her face and locked. Lady Edith struggled almost frantically to open it, but without success; she then called for help, but no ear

seemed to listen, for all around was still and silent as death.

Strong and calm as the mind of Lady Edith usually was, it now seemed to give way, for she covered her face with her hands, overborne by the suddenness of a shock which almost took from her all power of recollection, and bewildered her with perplexity what to think, and still more what to do. Until now, Lady Edith had always been able to trace out a clear line of duty, and had death itself been the penalty she could have bravely followed in the path; but here she felt bewildered in a mesh of little intrigues and little secrets not to be explained or understood, though threatening apparently all in life that she held precious upon earth, the affection and even the religious principles of her own beloved Beatrice, dear to her as the memory of her own buried children.

Lady Edith, standing at the chapel-gate, leaned her forehead on the cold iron railing, and though not a tear came to her relief, she remained absorbed in anguish, hearing nothing, seeing nothing, and scarcely conscious of time, as the heavy weight of suspense and anxiety gathered more depth on her lonely heart. A light step approached, but she heard it not till suddenly her hand was clasped in that of another, and on looking up Sir Allan stood before her, his eye beaming with all its old expression of respectful affection and kindness. In his smile, nevertheless, there was a fixed sadness far deeper than tears, and several minutes elapsed before either could articulate.

At length Lady Edith, making an effort to compose herself, shortly related all that had occurred during that morning, while Sir Allan listened with a look of burning indignation and sorrow. No sooner had Lady Edith finished her brief and agitated narrative, than he exclaimed with glowing energy, "This must not be, Aunt Edith, you shall see Beatrice instantly. I rashly bound myself to secrecy. I may not speak, but I may act. They have taught me such evasions, and shall take the consequences. I carry a pass-key to this private chapel. You shall enter immediately, if such be your desire. No inducement—no, none whatever, can lead me to desert your interests. I was no party in this affair, and never shall be."

Sir Allan paused not a moment, but threw open the massy gates, and Lady Edith hastily entered by the same low door at which Beatrice had previously disappeared, beside which one of Lord Eaglescairn's servants stood, who ostentatiously crossed himself on seeing a heretic advancing into the chapel. A strong smell of incense, which seemed intoxicating as chloroform, assailed Lady Edith as, approaching the door of an inner apartment she passed through the chancel and entered that stone cell wherein she had once observed the prostrate figure of an aged nun.

Prepared as she had been for something uncommon, a sight met the view of Lady Edith on advancing into that room, far exceeding her utmost anticipations or her worst fears. Father Eustace stood within the cell, attired in the full costume of

his order, a black robe in the form of a toga, with a cross worked in gold on the right breast, his bright black Spanish eyes fixed on Beatrice, who stood trembling beside him, evidently shaken by some deep emotion, while he spoke with vehemence and gesticulation quite unusual even to him. Mr. Ambrose had placed himself before Beatrice, evidently in a state of high excitement, and beside Lord and Lady Eaglescairn sat a foreign-looking lady in a conventual costume, the sight of whose countenance startled Lady Edith, engrossed at once her whole attention, and filled her with dismay. Lady Edith's eyes seemed to freeze as she looked at the stranger, her lips became livid, and she stood motionless with consternation, for she saw before her one who was in dress, features, and expression the living realization of that long-cherished miniature which had been restored to Beatrice in her childhood—the very individual in whose arms her young *protégée* had been landed from the wreck.

It burst upon Lady Edith in one frightful shock that her own Beatrice, her adopted foundling, had been claimed by some hitherto unknown Popish relatives; and great was the agitation of Lady Edith when this conjecture first darted into her mind. For a few moments her impulse was, hopefully to consider that proofs of the stranger's identity might be wanting,—that she could resist the evidence unless it were too strong to be impugned; but after Lady Edith had measured the stranger's face, inch by inch, with intense ex-

amination, who could deny an unmistakeable likeness to the lady who had been cast ashore from the shipwreck with Beatrice? As the consciousness of this flashed on her conviction, she shivered with grief and agitation. It could be no chance resemblance, and covering her face with her hands, Lady Edith silently smothered a groan of anguish, while she turned away and wept in the sorrowful apprehension that Beatrice might soon be wrenched from her by foreign relatives and priestly guardians.

In respect to the religious creed of that stranger lady, the consecrated place in which Lady Edith had seen her some weeks before, as well as now, left her not a vestige of hope that this relative of Beatrice was otherwise than a Papist, and obviously a very strict one. She looked like the living personification of Vandyke's celebrated portrait representing the dignified abbess of a Spanish convent. The white linen round her forehead, the dark hood over her head, the night-black drapery of her robe hanging in massy folds, the knotted rope round her waist, and the long rosary of richly carved beads, from which a large cross of magnificent diamonds was suspended at her girdle,—the whole figure was a striking tableau, and exhibited a personage of no ordinary importance; while the dignified expression of her pale countenance, and the commanding stateliness of her whole aspect, proclaimed the stranger accustomed to authority, and very capable of using it; yet she bent down in a semblance of the lowliest humility before Father

Eustace, whom she looked at with a reverence amounting almost to adoration.

Lady Edith had entered so noiselessly at the open door of the vestry, that neither she nor Allan attracted any notice at first from the assembled party, whose feelings were evidently at that moment in a state of the most vehement excitement. Mr. Ambrose had ceased to address Beatrice as Lady Edith entered, but Father Eustace took up the subject, saying in a tone of deep and very stern resolution, "Consider well before you answer. More than life depends on your decision."

"It requires no consideration—it never can," replied Beatrice in a low, tremulous, but perfectly decided voice. "I adhere to my own faith, and to my old home."

"Yet you are told, Beatrice Farinelli, as you have hitherto been named, how near are the relatives ready to claim your dutiful affection—that your own mother, ignorant of our language, and believing that not a soul but herself had been saved from the shipwreck, retired to the convent of St. Veronica, under a vow of perpetual penitence, and of a meritorious silence never to be broken, except to her confessor. Through me, then, she now claims your affection and your obedience. Instead of being as hitherto an outcast from every tie of relationship, you are now offered troops of friends, and a position high above them all in rank and fortune. The simple condition is, that you remain in this house to be taught the truth. She cannot and dare not acknowledge a heretic daughter,

whose influence must become so great if used against her own faith, her own church, and her own noble family—a family which you may perhaps one day represent. Say, can you hesitate? Does not duty as well as inclination dictate obedience to your only parent? From the moment when you were lost she has remained under a saintly vow of perpetual silence, a penance which she has faithfully kept, to the praise and edification of all who witness it. Never more is her voice to be heard on the earth, till you are converted. Let the voice of filial duty speak in your own heart.”

“Why was I not claimed at once? Why have I been left here in ignorance of any such relationship, when my history was known throughout the whole neighbourhood? Surely, even from within the walls of a convent, I might have been traced,” said Beatrice in a low trembling whisper. “Through life I have known but one mother and one friend. Whatever I am, she formed me; whatever I know, she taught me; whatever I possess, she gave me. Lady Edith has been all in all to her adopted child, and I cannot give her up.”

“You shall!—you must!” exclaimed Father Eustace in a tone of most imperious authority, and holding up his finger in a menacing attitude; “I can produce now your late father’s will, appointing you to be Lord Eaglescain’s ward; therefore, he legally claims you to remain under his guardianship. He can force you to do so. He will make you listen to the teaching of our Church, and disown all who ever taught you otherwise.”

No—no! an hundred times no!” exclaimed Beatrice in low, earnest accents. “Would the first lesson of your Church be to inculcate ingratitude? What is there on earth that I do not owe to my more than mother, my most generous benefactress? Oh, that she could but know all and advise me now—tell me, with her own true judgment, what would be the dictate of religion!”

“Her religion!” muttered Father Eustace contemptuously between his teeth. “The old heretic! I could willingly thrust her alive into that fire and stamp upon her! Do you persist in adhering to one whom we consider an enemy to truth and to ourselves!”

“Yes,” replied Beatrice, with scarcely audible agitation, “I have said it, and need not unnecessarily repeat words which irritate you thus.”

At this moment Lady Edith, having overheard the half soliloquy of Father Eustace and his subsequent question, slowly advanced into the middle of the circle, and with unflinching firmness looked steadily at each of the astonished countenances around. To all but the delighted Beatrice, her presence was as unwelcome as it was unexpected, and yet the calm dignity of her expression commanded instant respect. In the silence which followed, no eye but that of Beatrice could meet hers, in which there shone the lofty consciousness of rectitude and truth.

Lady Edith had heard all, as though she heard it not; and having recalled her nearly bewildered senses, she now, with her wonted tranquil grace of

manner walked straight up to Beatrice, and laying her hand on her arm, said in low solemn accents, while every syllable fell singly from her lips in the effort it cost her to speak, "I know all now, my child; I know how deeply you have been tried,—how firmly you have stood. Beatrice, I am at this moment more than rewarded for a lifetime of prayer on your account."

Lady Edith's voice faltered, she bent her head till it rested on the shoulder of Beatrice, and struggled to conceal the overwhelming emotion that choked her utterance. After a short conflict with her feelings, she fixed her eyes on Mr. Ambrose, whose countenance had already resumed its usual imperturbable nothingness of expression, and in a low voice of earnest remonstrance she said, "It would have been unlike the frank and honest character of any Protestant minister to sanction proceedings so clandestine as these; but your Church thinks otherwise. Why am I, always till this hour the guardian of Beatrice, to be excluded from the knowledge of events which seem to involve her whole welfare? That I see before me now, probably, the mother of my adopted child, it is impossible to dispute; that face once seen I could not forget; but why, if your intentions be legally right, conceal the facts from me? If anything be for the real good of Beatrice, could I do otherwise than rejoice at it, knowing well that no prosperity can shake her attachment to myself, nor her allegiance to the faith in which we both hope to live and die."

"Let your attachment to Miss Farinelli be proved now," said Father Eustace contumeliously. He then advanced with his usual noiseless velvet step, while his glittering eyes looked cold as steel at Lady Edith, seeing which, Beatrice cowered closer to her benefactress, while the nervous pressure of her hand upon her arm indicated the agitation she endured. "This young lady, once accidentally thrown into your power, and now discovered by her only parent, is claimed to fill a noble position, for which she was born. While Miss Farinelli continues under the baleful influence of heretics, the proofs that entitle her to rank, fortune, friends, and influence beyond your utmost dreams, shall be withheld. Resign her then entirely, and at once, to a parent who will allow no half-measures. She is entitled by law, as much as by duty, to claim her own daughter."

Beatrice tearfully clasped in her hand the folds of Lady Edith's dress, who threw her own arm round her adopted child with a solemn sadness of manner, more impressively affecting than the keenest burst of anguish, while the affectionately attached girl trembled like a leaf in the blast of autumn. In the progress of a conversation which ensued, the intentions of Father Eustace and of Mr. Ambrose appeared more and more developed, when the astonishing conviction became unavoidable to Lady Edith, that they aimed at nothing less than the immediate and final separation of herself from the child of her whole affections and care.

Still she lost neither her presence of mind nor her dignified composure, but listened with a look of solemn patience to all they said, while Beatrice tightly grasped her arm as if for protection. The more her agitation increased the less outward show did it make, for Beatrice had become still and pale as a corpse, while Father Eustace proceeded in a calm resolute voice to intimate, that as the mother of Beatrice had obtained but a short leave of absence from her convent at present, it was necessary, as a matter of course, that for so brief a period her daughter should remain with her at Eaglescairn Castle, to receive through him those communications which, owing to her rigid vow of silence, she could not give herself.

Lady Edith listened in dignified attention, but with a penetrating look that made Father Eustace cast down his eyes and become as silent as if he had been a stone statue of himself, and as if his mind had been marble. The presence of Sir Allan became now of importance, because the priests felt it necessary, before an intended proselyte like himself, with much in his power, to moderate the harshness of their measures. While Beatrice drew her hand across her forehead, evidently bewildered by the scene, Sir Allan stood near her, with his peculiarly long, dark eye-lashes so entirely concealing his eyes, that whether he had any eyes or not might have seemed doubtful; but when the voice of Lady Edith, in attempting to speak, utterly failed, he suddenly looked up with a flashing glance of indignant remonstrance to Father Eustace,

which reminded Beatrice of old times, when Allan's heart and mind were allowed to act for themselves, and he exclaimed, "Surely a separation so sudden and so final never can be dreamed of. Lady Edith can remain here also."

"Allan McAlpine, leave all to me," said Mr. Ambrose, laying a hand on the arm of his nephew, and fixing on him that intense and peculiar look which seemed always to command implicit obedience. "Much is due to the life-long attachment of Lady Edith for Miss Farinelli, therefore let an arrangement now be made that they meet occasionally. I cannot doubt that Lady Edith, seeing the claim of filial duty now made on her young favourite, will consent to a short separation, on condition that frequently Miss Farinelli shall be conveyed for an hour to Heatherbrae. There can be no hesitation about a mother's prior claim."

The hard and cruel voice of Mr. Ambrose was studiously softened as he uttered this wily proposition, while Lady Edith listened with dignified astonishment, scarcely believing that her ears were listening to such a suggestion as that of leaving Beatrice behind. If the assembled party had proposed to eat her up alive, she could scarcely have looked more surprised and shocked than at the idea of her adopted child becoming exposed alone to the machinations of such very skilful intriguers; yet, before many minutes Lady Edith found that these were the best terms likely to be offered. The three conspirators, as she considered Mr. Ambrose, Father Eustace, and Lord Eaglescarm,

whose countenance had become uncommonly red, looked all contemptuously certain of carrying their point, while the whole soul of Beatrice seemed in her eyes and ears, as she still convulsively riveted her hold of the only friend in that room she could trust.

Lady Edith, seeing an increasing pallor on the countenance of Beatrice, became deeply anxious to end a scene so agitating, and affectionately taking her hand said, with deep emotion, "My Beatrice knows I have always loved her, but she shall now see how I esteem and can trust her. For one week, Beatrice, you have my consent to remain here, and I know without that you would not stay an hour. There can, I trust, be no risk. Your welfare is necessary to make my own life endurable; but you are well aware, that no one is worse than I am at refusing a request, therefore come to me sometimes for one hour; and I shall endeavour to do without you during the rest." At these words an expression of fierce delight glittered in the eyes of Father Eustace, while Lady Edith, on whom nothing was lost, slowly continued: "I must honestly own—for cost what it may, I will speak the truth—that this lady habited now as an abbess, is evidently the person saved from shipwreck with Beatrice; no legal proof is necessary of that; but tell me, Lord Eaglescairn,—on your word of honour as a British peer,—is this the mother of Beatrice?"

Lady Edith's brilliant eyes had always seemed to have the power of divining at a glance the in-

inmost recesses of any one's most secret thoughts, and her look became fastened on Lord Eaglescairn, as if life or death were in his reply, but he stammered, his eyes fell, and his answer broke down entirely; until Father Eustace, with resolute composure, put in his word, saying, "We are ready to pledge ourselves"——

Lady Edith's eye, calm, resolute, and clear-sighted, still remained steadily fastened on Lord Eaglescairn, while, as if no interruption had taken place from the priest, she added, "Let my reliance be on your honour, Lord Eaglescairn. Your confessor and I have always preferred being strangers. In my Church there is no difference between a wicked falsehood, and a religious lie told under a dispensation for the advantage of a certain church. To you, Lord Eaglescairn, I appeal as a British peer, to whom truth and honour are one. If you can pledge your sacred word that Beatrice is now in the presence of her own mother, she shall have my consent to remain under your roof for a week."

Lord Eaglescairn, industriously twisting his spectacles between his fingers, gave a furtive glance towards Father Eustace. He looked much confused, and considerably alarmed besides, but his very soul seemed in a state of helpless prostration before the priest, whose features retained their usual imperturbable stillness; yet some signal passed between them, such as the initiated only could understand. Lord Eaglescairn carefully avoided the eye of Lady Edith, and after a few moments' pause, assumed towards her an expression

of towering pride not to be questioned, and said, vainly attempting a tone of resolute assurance, "I have no reason to doubt the assertion of Father Eustace, or the evidence of my own senses, that the mother of Miss Farinelli still lives."

Lady Edith's eyes remained fixed on the averted face of Lord Eaglescairn, with a look of almost pitying forbearance, though of evident misgiving, while trying to trace whether any Jesuitical evasion were concealed under his reply, and her silence was eloquent with emotion, while a pause of several minutes ensued, during which the fine but very stern eyes of Father Eustace shot a glance at the hesitating peer, of angry and very solemn admonition. Beatrice meanwhile could not but perceive the telegraphic looks of the priest, and with what an angry shrug he turned away while she leaned on the chimney-piece, looking white as the marble beside her, yet there appeared an increasing air of lofty decision and of gentle firmness in her expression now, very different indeed from the careless girlish vivacity of former days.

Sir Allan, while in his restless agitation he impatiently tattooed on the table beside him, secretly thought that among all the beautiful statues he had ever admired abroad, he had never yet beheld the representation of so much grace, of so much beauty, of so much simple dignity, as in the lovely companion of his own boyhood, now lost to him for ever.

"Beatrice," said Lady Edith, her lip quivering with emotion, but now impatient to close an interview which had caused to both the most death-

like anguish, "this is our first separation, but I can trust to your faithful affection even when leaving you in this house. Your religion is not like the ivy that cannot stand alone, yet were my words now the last piece of motherly advice your old friend is ever to give, it should be this, 'Adhere to your Bible.'"

Father Eustace started angrily forward with teeth clenched, and contempt blazing in his eye; but Lady Edith firmly met his irritated glance, and then, with an irresistible burst of strong emotion, most unlike her usual calm self-possession, she clasped Beatrice in her arms and added, in a tone of solemn earnestness, "Martyrs will abound, Beatrice, where martyrs are required, but how many have died for the difference of faith which divides you from those with whom you are now to be left! I could myself go to the stake,—I could perish in such flames as Father Eustace says I deserve, rather than see you part with a single Protestant principle. May that be your guide, and then, come what may in this world, or in the world to come, we shall meet again. Time is short and life very uncertain, but no mortal can part us for ever. We meet again!"

"Yes!" exclaimed Beatrice, with a flash of strong determination in her beautiful eyes, "When you please, Aunt Edith, and where you please, we shall meet again."

Lady Edith and Beatrice remained for several minutes locked in each other's arms. Their feelings were too solemn for tears, too deep for words;

—once more they embraced, and Lady Edith, filled with internal anguish, and not venturing to look up, passed out of the room, leaning on the offered arm of Sir Allan, who conducted her to the carriage, and protested, in a voice, low, tremulous, and broken with agitation, that he would watch over Beatrice,—that he would call soon and often to see Lady Edith herself at Heatherbrae.

Father Eustace and Mr. Ambrose, looking like a couple of lay figures, observed every evidence of natural feeling with strongly marked contempt; but while Sir Allan had listened and observed what passed with an almost convulsive eagerness, the shadowy chain of all his old associations and of all his long-cherished love for Lady Edith and Beatrice, seemed to revive in greater strength if possible than ever. “Surely my uncle will never be found beside Truth at the bottom of a well,” muttered he to himself; “Father Eustace, too, sailed very near the wind in all he asserted, but whatever pain it costs his conscience is a sacrifice to benefit the church.”

A smile,—a momentary one, passed, like a gleam of light, over Lady Edith’s features, as in taking the arm of Sir Allan she observed his emotion; for now a hopefulness, not to be entirely crushed by surrounding circumstances, whispered to her that he might yet be reclaimed,—and her last words to Beatrice at parting, were, “Be happy here, my dear girl, if you can,—it will be my greatest comfort, in our first separation, to believe that you are so. No doubt can ever occur to my

mind that you will always even here remain faithful and true to your own religion and to your own friend. Yes! you will walk safely through all the burning ploughshares of controversy."

Beatrice listened in tears, and felt how difficult it would be to enjoy anything without the kind companion, who, having lost every earthly desire on her own account, yet endeavoured to bestow on her beloved young *protégée* such happiness as she could never herself enjoy. There is no second spring on earth for the broken in heart.

One moment, and the carriage had drawn to the door of St. Bridget's Chapel, to convey Lady Edith, and in little more than a moment she had been handed into it. Gradually her spirits became more composed, or rather it might be said stupified by exhaustion after the shock she had received, and the sight of external nature again had its usual influence in soothing her agitated spirit. The ancient cedars cast their broad shadows on the grass, and the birds were singing their evening vespers, as Lady Edith proceeded homewards. To her sensitive mind, the simple sounds and common aspects of rural life presented a never-failing charm, and her sympathy with living nature brought a soothing relief from the cares and interests of artificial life. No one admired more the picturesque grandeur of mountain and valley, of the hoary forest, or the wide-spreading ocean; but, to a spirit like Lady Edith's, full of all life's kindest affections, it was the sight of active existence that was interesting. The animals turned

loose in the daisied field to enjoy their liberty, the children at play before their cottage homes, the busy housewife knitting beside her door, even the ravens whirling homeward to their ancient rookery, among the aged beech-trees; and, above all, her own pupils and pensioners at Clanmarina, who rushed to the doors and windows of their dwellings to give her a smiling welcome on returning home "at last;" and a hurrah so loud and discordant that it sounded almost like a chorus for the million.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Lady Edith, looking at two long lines of firelight from the setting sun, reflected on sea and sky, till both met on the glowing horizon. "Such is death to a Christian disappearing from this sad earth, but leaving a stream of light and warmth, reaching both to heaven and earth, behind. Alas, for those poor attached villagers! Little do they know how soon and certainly my friendly influence here must end in priestly domination, backed by their own once-loved landlord! Poor Allan! formerly our pride and hope, now worked up to delirious superstition, and ever, as of old, so ready to sacrifice himself, that the priests would consider themselves committing a foolish crime not to fleece so willing a victim of his last farthing!"

CHAPTER II.

"Did any one that he was happy say,
Johnson would tell him plainly 'twas a lie !
A lady told him she was really so,
On which he sternly answer'd, ' Madam, no ! ' "

BEATRICE, according to Lady Edith's advice, resolved to be amused and happy, while joining in all the diversions at Eaglescairn, during this forced absence from her own quiet home. The pompously magnificent style continued long a subject of wonder and a source of ennui to her unaccustomed mind ; but she never tired of contemplating the fine old pictures, among which was one by Gainsborough, universally thought to bear an almost miraculous resemblance to herself. It was the beautiful wife of the previous Lord Eaglescairn, in all the pride of youth and beauty, but so startlingly like Beatrice that Lord Iona declared he could hardly tear himself away from admiring it. " She must have been your grandmother without knowing it ! " he said one morning, after looking first at the portrait and then at Beatrice. " Do you not feel as if looking in a mirror when that picture catches your eye ? "

" Yes ; if I had ever worn a court-dress like that

splendid gold brocade, and the nodding plume of feathers. One of them has dropped out of her head, you see, and she has smilingly picked it up. I never saw so exquisite a painting, or so life-like a countenance."

"Do let us have you in a tableau to represent this picture!" exclaimed Lady Anne. "I know where that very dress has lain in a chest, like the "Bride of the Mistletoe Bough," for half a century, and you positively shall let us see you in it, feathers and all! I am sure we should all then trace the resemblance, though Miss Turton says the picture is quite as like herself."

"Pshaw! Miss Turton would see herself in a stone wall," said Lord Iona impatiently. "But now for making that portrait live. My mother allows me the use of her whole stage wardrobe for such occasions; therefore, Anne, pray lose not a minute."

"You speak as if I were a perfect dawdle, Iona; but when did I ever put off any pleasure for half a moment?" said Lady Anne, hurrying Beatrice away with her; "but I am a perfect Gulliver, insensible to all the Lilliputian attacks of your petty malice."

In the very shortest possible time a picture-frame had been produced from the garret, a black gauze was hung before it, and Beatrice, blushing and smiling, stood beside that old picture. It had a pretty, pouting, spoiled-child expression, which she exactly imitated, and thus appeared as its living and perfect representative. "Wonderful! strange!

unaccountable!" was the universal exclamation, and so occupied were the company of comedians and actors with the astonishing effect of their experiment, that they were not aware of any one else having entered, till Beatrice was startled out of her assumed posture by hearing an angry oath of astonishment and consternation muttered at her side; and, on looking hurriedly round, she saw the object of her especial terror, Lord Eaglescairn, with a look of strange agitation, standing beside Father Eustace, whose eyes were fixed upon her with an expression of wonder and even of dismay. Beatrice instantly stepped out of her frame, and plucked the feathers from her head, with a feeling of alarm that she had been led into doing that of which Lord Eaglescairn disapproved; but no further notice was ever taken of the incident, and the lively Lady Anne soon forgot that interruption to Beatrice's representation, while she dressed up a group, including herself, as a young novice taking the veil, with Miss Turton equipped as lady abbess, and Sir Allan as her confessor.

"It would be well for you, Anne," said Lord Iona, with more gravity than he usually seemed master of, "if playing at monks and nuns were never more in earnest with you and M^cAlpine than now. I wish you both a better fate than to realize this tableau!"

Lady Anne blushed and looked down, while Sir Allan blushed also and looked at her.

Beatrice had frequently of late heard Lady Edith observe, that owing to the unsuspecting security of

all Protestants in England, and the creeping, quiet, ceaseless perseverance of the Jesuits, it might not perhaps be many years before their clever and unscrupulous tactics should make them paramount throughout the length and breadth of the nation; but what she had listened to half incredulously of their depth and cunning, thinking it all a mere romantic apprehension, was now brought most suddenly and strongly home to her own experience; yet she could not but smile at the droll tone in which Lord Iona said to her, the first time they met again, "Console yourself for being imprisoned here, as you resemble the fair lady in Comus, who lived among the wicked without being contaminated herself."

"I shall probably also resemble her in escaping from the magic thralldom, at last," said Beatrice, smiling; "but there is more than Arabian hospitality in this house, where guests are so splendidly entertained, and moreover kept against their will."

"You shall have bread and salt as the pledge of our good intentions," said Lord Iona; "but observe, I do not answer for those of Father Eustace."

When Beatrice was suddenly separated from Lady Edith, under such very peculiar circumstances, she resolved to look her own position full in the face. Unskilled in the world and in society, she naturally expected to go through a scene of persuasion or of persecution, in order to her becoming a pervert from that pure Protestant faith for which she would willingly have died, and accord-

ingly she nerved her spirit to meet the anticipated storm. Beatrice could make up her mind, if her newly-found mother required it, to be locked up; she firmly contemplated bread and water for the whole week, and even a dark room, which she had always most particularly abhorred. In short, little Red Ridinghood was not more in terror of the wolf than she was of Father Eustace, knowing as she did that persecution is the duty of a papist. She had read lately, in the published works of a Cardinal, that "to burn heretics is as binding a duty as abstinence on a Friday," and her soul revolted from all association with those who so little understood the mild spirit of Christianity. Leaning her forehead disconsolately against the cold window-glass of her own room, with feelings of romantic excitement, Beatrice thought of those who had been forcibly cloistered for life. She even remembered, without flinching, how cruelly Constance de Beverley had been built up in the wall of her convent, and a grand martyr-spirit beat high in the warm heart of Beatrice, as she asked herself how much for conscience' sake she could be ready to endure? In her own private room, her hands clasped on her knees, and her eyes steadfastly fixed on the floor, perhaps Richard the Third, before the battle of Bosworth, was not more disturbed in his mind than Beatrice, now sitting *tête-à-tête* with her own thoughts, looking patient, resigned, but most anxious and unhappy.

Beatrice was armed, in short, at all points for any trial except that which actually came, and

which had not occurred to her imagination. Expected circumstances never happen! From the hour of Lady Edith's departure to Heatherbrae, the subject of religion was not once mentioned in her presence. It seemed to have vanished from the recollection of all present, while nothing was thought of but how to make life one scene of holiday enjoyment; how to amuse her most, and to please her best. The first time Lady Eaglescain entered her room, Beatrice had summoned up a look of heroic firmness, but it was completely lost on her hostess, whose conversation became at once full of airy nothings, as she led her down to the drawing-room, saying,—

“I hereby appoint you to the post of being my favourite friend, Miss Farinelli.”

“It is not always a very permanent appointment, mother,” said Lord Iona in a rallying tone. “I must flatly and roundly declare that you have run up several eternal friendships lately, that have not lasted for ever and a day.”

“Of course not, and for very good reasons,” replied she, in a tone between jest and very sad earnest. “Once I valued affection above all price, and hoped to enjoy it; once I could have begged as earnestly to be loved as any beggar for his daily food, but my speculations on mutual attachment were not successful. I have almost given up hope, and with hope desire.”

“Why so?” asked Beatrice, in a tone of real sympathy; “surely kindness will beget kindness.”

“Not a whit! Kindness only begets the expec-

tation of more, which is doubled and re-doubled till I can give nothing in addition. If I wish to deserve the gratitude of any one in my valuable assortment of friends, they expect greater and greater favours, till the point comes at last, where I can go no further."

"Then you draw bridle," interrupted Lord Iona, laughing, "and slam the door of your heart in the astonished faces of your would-be friends. In such a case of course they are more angry than if you had never shown any desire to conciliate them."

"Certainly. I gave my nephew, Tom Gascoigne, a horse lately, and he never ceased hinting how well it would go in a gig; and when I at last gave him the gig, he wished for an increase of his allowance, that he might be enabled to keep it. I sent his sister Fanny a ticket for the Caledonian ball, and she said it would be impossible to go unless she could somehow or another get a dress. Well did I know what that meant. She has no more feeling than a band-box."

"Do you remember, mother, last year inviting the Fitzgeralds to stay here, and they wrote that it was impossible to come without the children. You yielded and invited them, when the party soon after arrived, bringing a governess and tutor, the most troublesome people that ever entered a house. I flatter myself my attractions were what made the visit so agreeable that they remained on for ever and a day."

"Yes, for two long months, till I intimated that we were leaving home for a few days. They very

coolly asked my leave to await my return here, and when I said it was our invariable rule to leave the house empty when we quitted our own fire-side, they took so much offence that we parted worse friends than when we met."

"Of course; the pleasanter their visit was the more sorry they were ever to go, and the more angry they were at not being pressed to stay," added Lord Iona, in a tone of gay condolence. "What an ill-used farewell they bid you, not one driblet of gratitude remaining!"

"Not one," replied Lady Eaglescairn, querulously. "What I had done then to cement our friendship only ended it."

"Yes," replied Lord Iona, with a tragi-comic laugh; "how well I remember waving my white handkerchief as an adieu to the Fitzgeralds, and your snatching it out of my hands, saying, they would pretend to think we were summoning them back."

"There is a want of adhesiveness even in servants, now," said Lady Stratharden, in a tone of quiet melancholy. "I, who hate strangers about me, have had to change my abigail five times in the last three years. The least hint of finding a fault, and they instantly say, 'If my Ladyship is not pleased, they are quite ready to seek another place.' Servants in this country are become as independent as the American 'helps,' and the smallest addition of wages offered them in another house, will carry off the best in my establishment."

"Yes," said Lady Eaglescairn, "the more pre-

sents and indulgences I give them, the more they think me desirous to conciliate them, and the more difficult each servant becomes to please. They 'want a change!' They would like 'to see a little more of the world.' I honour and respect a steady servant of long standing; but such servants are so rare now, that they should be shown as lions in the Zoological gardens. Everybody and everything is on a railroad of restlessness and movement."

"You should advertise for an attachable servant, not going to the diggings, nor wishing to be a policeman—salary unlimited," said Lord Iona, in a rallying tone; "or see if your next will at once consent to be apprenticed for seven years."

"Well," replied Lady Stratharden, sadly, "if I knew the abigail who would drop a tear over my coffin, what would I not give her? The last maid who left me proposed to have an interview of two hours with her successor, that she might put her up to 'my ways,' and I would have given the world to be invisibly present, as I had not an idea that I had any 'ways.'"

"Yes you have," said Lord Iona, in a laughing tone, wishing to enliven Lady Stratharden, whose eyes were despondingly fixed on her daughter, talking earnestly to Father Eustace, "I only wonder that any abigail could enumerate them all in two hours, for they might have occupied five at least. I know you well!"

"If you do," replied Lady Stratharden, in a tone of helpless despondency, as she still watched Father Eustace, "you know one who has lived

to witness the sad end of all her dearest earthly affections."

"Not yet—not finally," answered Lord Iona, following the direction of her eyes, with a sorrowful sympathy that he tried to hide, while he stirred up the already blazing fire, as if intent on being burned alive. "What is the use of racking our hearts with feeling and our heads with sense, when good nonsense is, after all, worth both united! Give me a heart of stone, or a cap and bells, rather than sensibility in a world like this. Every medal has its reverse; and happiness to-day is misery to-morrow ——."

"Yes," interrupted Lady Stratharden, solemnly, "but both end in the inevitable grave!"

"You are quite in a black melancholy to-day; but now I strongly advise you to take my advice—the advice of the most sensible man in your acquaintance—and follow my example," said Lord Iona, anxious to cheer the desponding mother. "We all know that there is a tide in the affairs of mice and of men. If one wave of misfortune rolls over me after another, I feel quite enlivened with thinking that things positively are at their worst. I have stood with my back to the wall pelted and worried by petty vexations, till I felt as if no circumstance in life were ever to go straight again; and all the time I triumph in the thought, that things are coming to a climax, and that 'behind the cloud the sun is still shining.'"

Beatrice listened to this little dialogue with an engrossing interest, which made her forget she had

any troubles of her own. She was amused at the mixture of sense and of nonsense in Lord Iona; but saw plainly that a sense of duty and religion was not wanting amidst all his apparent *étourderie*, and she felt what a happiness it might be, during her unwilling residence at Eaglescairn, if she could minister to a mind so sadly diseased as that of Lady Stratharden, whose well-founded anxiety respecting Lady Anne was so evident, and so touching from its very helplessness. While Father Eustace continued, with his usual look of self-satisfied humility, to engross the attention of Lady Stratharden's daughter, who listened with flushed cheek and flashing eye, Beatrice looked at the anxious mother's anxious face, and thought of those beautiful lines by Bayley—

"Present anguish hast thou felt
O'er thy fond heart's dearest treasure?
As a mourner hast thou knelt
In the hour of deep affliction?
Let no impious thought intrude;
Meekly bow with this conviction,—
Grief was sent thee for thy good."

When Lady Anne's long, earnest, absorbing interview with Father Eustace was over, anxious evidently to prevent her mother from taking fright at so excessive an intimacy, she advanced towards Lady Stratharden, with a dancing step, full of grace and vivacity. Lady Anne then suddenly whirled herself round and round in an ecstasy of heedless laughter, till her rich brocaded silk dress became completely inflated, when curtseying very

low, she dropped down, Lord Iona assured her, so as perfectly to represent the very best Stilton cheese. "I believe," he added, "that in choosing a new dress, Anne, you always have this graceful achievement in view, and pay a shilling a yard more for one that will stand out properly. It is the only thing on earth that I cannot do!"

"I could name a million of things you cannot do, Iona! Is there anything indeed that you can do well?"

"How very malicious, Anne, when you know that in your service I echo every laugh, chorus every song, start every jest, follow up any joke, am in every part of a room at once, arranging or disarranging, ordering or disordering—enliven the merriest party, and can always detect a coming marriage, even before the parties themselves have thought of it! Besides, Anne," added her lively cousin, with a seriously warning look, "I can also find out a coming perversion, before the victim apprehends any danger. Beware, Anne, for the ice is shaking under your feet, and, once engulfed in Romanism, the Humane Society does not exist that could rescue you from what is far worse than death,—the degradation of body and soul in a convent."

The object of all exciting amusements is to escape from self-consciousness, and whether it be competing at a show of roses, or of black-cattle, writing a book, or running a horse at the Derby, dancing, acting, rowing, riding, or driving, every one seeks to forget his own identity, his cares, his hopes, and his sorrows. Children delight in being

anything but themselves ; they act the part of tutors or governesses, kings or queens, thieves or policemen, thus trying, whether in leisure or in exertion, they can forget ; and those who make religion a mere piece of scenic representation, thus at once recommend themselves to the natural craving of sinful man, whose object is to hide himself from himself.

The laughing hours at Eaglescairn were now spent by the juvenile members of the party in a state of strenuous idleness, for it is thought better by Papists for the young to do anything, rather than to think. Mr. Ambrose, having incidentally mentioned that the monks of St. Bernard's amuse themselves during the long winter evenings with whist, round-games, and dancing, Lord Iona said he thought it too good an example not to be followed. He joyously ordered up the Highland piper immediately, and according to Highland practice all the servants were invited to join in reels and country dances. A gay scene took place now in that grand saloon, which had seemed hitherto dedicated only to dignified dulness, and Beatrice felt in a surprising dream when she heard the bagpipes playing their noisiest measure, and when she saw round her the merriest party ever assembled together for diversion, even in the merriest of houses.

Beatrice knew that the personages most supernaturally proud towards their equals, are those who delight most to excite themselves by performing some piece of miraculous condescension

towards those immeasurably beneath, and she saw this confirmed when Lady Eaglescairn, with a smile of almost royal suavity, permitted herself to be placed at the head of a country dance, opposite to her greatly honoured, but rather intimidated partner, Mr. Macgregor, the head gardener. The Duke of Dorchester stood next below, with the very prettiest dairymaid who ever handled a churn, all dimples, smiles, and blushes, but evidently uplifted by this unusual honour far above the plebeian valets and grooms, whose attentions had hitherto been very acceptable; and as Beatrice took her place with Lord Iona, who seemed quite in a happy frenzy, they both laughed immeasurably to observe the enchanting mixture of dignity and frolic with which Miss Turton consented to perform with the gamekeeper. The poor man, with a head like a Scotch terrier, looked in a state of frantic awkwardness, under the overwhelming honour of such a partner.

"Sir Allan," said Lady Anne, who had been in very deep conversation with the Chief for nearly an hour, evidently on some topic of the gravest interest, "we shall soon take leave for ever of scenes such as these; but nuns abroad often bid farewell to the world by giving a ball, and dancing their last gay steps, before the final important step of all! Now let me tell you in the very strictest confidence, that I am actually disengaged for the next country dance."

"Indeed!" replied the young Chief, his handsome care-worn countenance relaxing into some-

thing very like the cheerful smile of his early days, and he looked now, dressed in the M^cAlpine tartan, the very image of Sir Evan.

"Pray, Sir Allan!" said the lively Lady Anne, stirring up a whirlpool in her tea-cup, "am I talking to my parrot, only to receive one word of reply! The remark I laid before you is, that a country dance, when well played, is very apt to make one think of dancing!"

"An exceedingly natural association of ideas," replied Sir Allan: "I am quite a paragon in everything except dancing, but that, for some years, has not been, as you know, my forte."

"What! a Highland Chief, and not dance to your own enlivening bagpipes? Impossible! You could not sit still if you tried! I certainly cannot!"

"And why should we?" said Sir Allan, rising with all the alertness of his boyhood. "You have made me feel ten years younger to-night, and certainly in my Oxford days I was reckoned great in a reel, and magnificent in a polka, Lady Anne! Pray let us go through the solemnity of a Highland reel together, and I shall perform it as if we were both competitors at the Holland-House games. I suppose you would not accept of me for a partner."

"Of course not!" said Lady Anne, in a tone of good-humoured caprice, "I have been very tired of you for the last hour! How dull and hum-drum we both are!"

"Then the best way to get rid of each other's

tiresome conversation is, to dance, and I am wearied to death of yours."

"Well!" said the spoiled beauty, with a look of amusing caprice, "I delight in hearing pleasant truths! I always said of you, Sir Allan, at Rome, that no one did a graceful thing so gracefully as the Chief of M^cAlpine, and your way of taking a hint is beyond all praise."

"I wish you would hint something more! Go all round the room and see if you can find any man as anxious to please you as I! Name your wishes, and I am the most obliging person on earth. As soon as I ascertain that it can be done without the possibility of putting myself to the very smallest inconvenience, I really do comply with the wishes of a friend; therefore, tell me yours?"

"No! for then I should see you beating a most graceful retreat. If some very particular somebody were to ask what I ask, you would do it," said Lady Anne, with a look of playful hilarity, very unlike the sombre expression her attractive countenance had sometimes recently assumed. "If I ask a favour then, perhaps, down may go my house of cards, for you will certainly negative the request!"

"Perhaps not! try me! I am in a state of invincible good humour, and there is nothing within the range of thought I could refuse you. I might even say to you, in the words of Sheridan,

'Friends in all the old you'll meet,
And partners in the young.'

"Just the sort of civil answer you could not avoid, and yet when you saw me so evidently expecting a compliment, I wonder you were not clever enough to evade it. Well! since you are so very anxious, I suppose I must dance with you. Look at all these maids in their freshest and newest dresses, with pretty coquettish-looking lace caps, evidently prepared to join in the dance, and a row of the gamekeepers and grooms standing beside them, looking frightfully shy! Was there ever seen before so merry a ball, such laughter, such flowers, and such dresses! It is like a ballet at the opera: therefore why should not I find a partner for every dance myself?"

"Nothing easier," replied Sir Allan, "I shall be a perfect St. Vitus to-night if you insist upon it, and administer moreover, all this evening, the soothing syrup of as many compliments and civilities as the case may seem to require."

"There are some persons, Sir Allan, whose utmost flatteries would be loathsome to me, but there are a very few from whom praise is acceptable, and you are one, therefore you shall be permitted to—to admire my dancing. As King Lear says, 'Pour on, I will endure!'"

"Really, the excess of my wish to say something very polite keeps me silent!"

"Then I can wait," replied Lady Anne demurely. "You sometimes make yourself quite ingeniously dull, and now I seem talking to the church steeple, with a small chime! You are as bright as the sun should be, but is not!

I already feel the better for all the agreeable things I am going to hear, and all the exercise I am about to take in this reel ; and after all, what harm can there be in a little quiet domestic confidential dancing like this, if it lead to no late hours or excess of any kind ?”

“David danced,” said Sir Allan, “and we read in Scripture that ‘there is a time to dance.’”

“It is quite a natural vent to one’s exuberant spirits,” said Lady Anne, rising eagerly. “Pray observe old Macgregor’s pirouettes ! It is a singular phenomenon in dancing, that the largest and heaviest men always spring the most buoyantly off the floor, and Macgregor looks like a barrel endowed with the activity of any cork springing from a bottle of champagne. That tall thin gardener beside him looks like a pair of insane tongs.”

The dancing soon became fast and furious, very unlike the languid mechanical movements of a lowland ball-room. The company danced with heart and soul, eyes, hands, and fingers, all in a state of frantic activity, while the men cracked their fingers like castenets, uttering every now and then a short sharp shout, perfectly startling, to encourage their own exertions, flying from end to end of the room like human rockets.

The feet of the dancers seemed everywhere at once, or nowhere, as they became almost invisible often, from the rapidity of the performer’s motions, springing, pirouetting, screeching, snapping their fingers, whirling each other round, and flinging

their limbs into inconceivable contortions. Still there was a certain degree of wild savage grace, united to all this marvellous animation, which could not but be admired; and while Beatrice laughed with juvenile hilarity at this curious scene, till the tears that sparkled in her eyes were glittering down her cheek, she felt pleased, as well as amused, by so extraordinary an exhibition. It had altogether a savage New Zealand aspect; but this was the old national dance, performed centuries ago in these very halls, and Beatrice watched with delight and wonder the careless gaiety of this animated party, so full of life and frolic.

"Miss Turton," exclaimed Lord Iona conscientiously, "you and I must beware of growing old and wise before our time!"

"No danger that either of us will be wise too soon," answered Miss Turton, affectedly fixing her eyes on the tips of her own white gloves; "your whole life, my Lord, is like a ballet at the Opera; but as for myself, I shall very soon take leave of all such tawdry ensnaring amusements as these."

"Yet, meanwhile, before you exchange one set of leading-strings for another, let us, like Seged, resolve to be happy. I see by that freezing smile, you feel very little reliance on my small stock of discretion, and would not think me a safe leader; but there may be worse, very much worse! If you go hand in hand with any one down to the depths of despair, let it be me, for I am either your best friend, or your worst enemy."

"You are the true Abbot of Unreason to-night,"

said Beatrice smiling ; “ or perhaps the Lord of Misrule ; at all events you are not the centre of gravity ! ”

“ Imagine—but no ; you can’t imagine !—nobody can !—but only conceive what a world this would be if everybody would take my advice and live under my directions. I have a perfect genius for happiness, and if I were to take the reins ”——

“ Pray do by all means,” said Beatrice laughing ; “ here is Lady Anne wishing it, I wish it, and everybody wishes it.”

“ Oh ! if you and everybody do, that settles the point. Then, here I am appointed by general acclamation, or at least by a minority of two, adviser-general to the present company.”

“ Yes, with a salary of nothing per annum and perquisites,” added Beatrice. “ You are now president of our little republic, and I suppose, like Louis Napoleon, your destiny must be fulfilled.”

“ Well ! hitherto my remarkable gift of wisdom has been of no more use to those around me than pearls to the sea ; but now I shall dive into all the desperate mysteries of every heart and mind. I shall be thoughtful for others, though thoughtless for myself. The very glance of my eye shall be an open sesame to those who would close the door of their minds against me. I read the real thoughts, and am not to be deceived by a ringing laugh, a rallying scold, a saucy answer, a gay imitation of love or anger, nor even by kind words. I shall penetrate into the Bluebeard’s closet of your inmost thoughts, and set them all to rights. As you say, Miss Turton”——

"Excuse me, my Lord, I have said nothing: therefore, whatever you are going to say is your own," interrupted Miss Turton, laughing. "I know you of old, always inflicting fifty thousand torments on me, attributing the strangest sentiments to me, and making people believe all you say of me."

"My portraits are all correct! Who would believe that your features could have executed such a frown, Miss Turton? You have put me in the corner now. I shall soon be in the house of correction as an imposter, but do I deserve it?" replied Lord Iona, raising up a fan between them in pretended terror, but glancing over it with a look of good-humoured malice. "You have found me out to be only a Bristol stone, when I am passing for a diamond. I must really get you mesmerized, Miss Turton. Father Eustace says his proselytes must believe this marble chimney-piece to be brass, if he desires you; but that is nothing to the influence I should gain over you all by means of biology. Father Eustace certainly understands the full use of that extraordinary art, and a very black art it might become in skilful hands. Girls in the convent, at Norwood, are put sometimes for eight days into a solitary room, where they must gaze, without ceasing, at a white-washed wall. If that does not make them go totally blind, it at least blinds their understandings, for if Dr. Darling, by making me stare for an hour at a white shilling, can make me forget my own name, and believe the key in my hand is red-hot, why,

after staring at a white wall for an entire day, you would be very easily persuaded that any picture is winking, or even stepping down from its frame. Positively, I saw my own cousin, Captain Dillon, one morning, with his senses turned so topsy-turvy, that he was made to believe the pianoforte to be a bay-horse. He took up the off fore-leg to see if it were spavined, and he mistook all the chairs for dogs."

"Then, perhaps, if we were all thoroughly biologized, I might mistake my cousin Iona for a sensible man!" said Lady Anne archly, "and think him almost handsome."

"That is rather beyond the powers of biology. If I were biologized very strongly myself, perhaps I might learn to think you a very polite well-bred cousin, only too partial to your own relations," replied Lord Iona, laughing, while Lady Anne made him a curtesy more than half a yard deep. "I know of old your admiration of me ever since you advised me to be done in wax-work for the Chamber of Horrors!"

"I did! What an atrocious calumny. You certainly have an indefinite degree of invention. On the day I could use such language, I must have been carrying a basket at Billingsgate; but you often delight in putting me out of temper, and putting me in again. I do remember your being very angry at my saying you had a manager-of-the-theatre air, and in revenge you called me the bluest of blue stockings."

"How very ill-natured! I must have meant Miss

Turton. Malvolio himself was not more vain of his yellow stockings cross-gartered, than Miss Turton that hers are blue. Ah! Miss Turton, I was just remarking that you have a splendid foot and ankle for showing blue stockings to advantage. How often you used to say that a new book is to you more enlivening than a glass of champagne!"

"Not now," said Miss. Turton, assuming a learned look. "Modern authors only chatter light and evanescent nonsense! I read, generally, the very oldest books"——

"Or perhaps no books at all! There is nothing in them now that you do not know already. Like Sixtus the Fifth, having gained your point you may fling away your crutches. You might write a book yourself, Miss Turton; there would be many worse, I dare say. You could describe with the accuracy of a daguerreotype what young ladies ought to be."

"Yes, and what young gentlemen ought not to be. I dislike excessively when they are satirical, idle, fond of dogs, of hunting, of racing"——

"If you are aiming at me, that is a failure! I never can be fond of racing till it is contrived that every horse shall win. Miss Turton, you are often as troublesome to me as a hair in my pen. You are quite a moral Quixote to-night, tilting against all my little windmills of errors."

"Well, Iona," said Lady Anne, "if mirth and motion prolong life, you will see us all out! Your whole existence is like a brilliant rondeau. You may be as long lived and as merry at a hundred

as that respectable individual old Parr, who must have been a most inconvenient member of society to his next heirs, as he outlaughed and outlived them all ! ”

“ So shall I, and write everybody’s memoirs. I shall immediately advertise myself as Biographer General to all those who keep diaries ‘for no eye but their own.’ I shall promise that no injunction of the author, never to let it be read, shall be in the slightest degree attended to ; but engage faithfully to publish every line, in spite of the very strongest prohibitions. I shall also be ready for an engagement as ‘ importunate friend ’ to any one anxious to be urged into publishing against his will.”

“ Some clever men aim at the great seal,” observed Beatrice, “ but your office will be the very reverse of that, as you are to break the seal of secrecy in every case.”

“ Certainly ! It is meant to be broken. How many value fame more than life ! Such men live all their lives, with their own autobiography in view, and seem to think, even on their death-beds, ‘ Now the last act of this public tragedy, in which I am chief performer, has come to an end ! I have advanced to this final point amidst thunders of applause ; let me finish the scene with spirit. My memoirs will go down to posterity ; therefore, I must think what should be said in my last hour to edify all around, and to be admired by posterity.’ ”

Lord Iona was absently touching the notes of a piano beside him, and producing a most discordant attempt at “ God save the Queen,” when Beatrice

laughingly said, "We must not be too complimentary on your music, in case of making you vain."

"Never fear! You and all the world have a special spite against me never to appreciate my merits; but though I am the favourite of Nature and Fortune, who have rivalled each other which shall endow me most, and though the fairies have added all their choicest gifts, yet you see I am not vain!"

"No! that is very evident," replied Beatrice in a tone of lively sarcasm. "As for Dame Fortune, even when her eyes are unbandaged, she has but one contemptible gift to bestow, and I despise money"——

"I abhor it," exclaimed Lord Iona, determined not to be outdone. "I would not pick up a purse of gold if I saw one on the floor! I always get rid of my income as fast as possible. You have no idea what generous things I do, or at least wish to do."

"That is an easy way of being generous which some people have invented," observed Beatrice. "A friend of mine, with only one hundred a-year, who is spare in everything but words, is constantly telling me how shamefully shabby she considers the conduct of all rich people. She declares that she would give me a hundred pounds for my charity school if she could afford it, and I am expected to be as thankful as if she did, and to laugh at the poor contracted notions of her sister, who with the same income lately sent me an honest-hearted ready-money subscription of five pounds."



“Well, if the first thought herself superlatively generous, we all live upon some happy delusion or other, and no thanks to those who open our eyes to any disagreeable truths,” replied Lord Iona, assuming an attitude of graceful meditation. “I know several persons, mere talking machines, who speak so amiably on every occasion, that one never finds out in such a hurricane of professions if they do nothing either liberal or generous. It is a capital plan, and very cheap! How good-natured we all are in our remarks to-night on the world in general, and our friends in particular!

‘What spirits were theirs, what wit and what whim,
Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb,—
Now wrangling and grumbling, to keep up the ball—
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!’”

Goldsmith.

CHAPTER III.

“On her hard pillow—there, alas ! to be
Nightly, through many and many a dreary hour,
Wan, often wet with tears,——
In anguish, in the ghastliness of death ;
Hers never more to leave those mournful walls,
Even on her bier.”—ROGERA.

NOTHING is more consolatory to Christian observers of life, than to perceive how very large is the proportion of happiness God bestows upon all the creatures to whom He has given existence. No greater mistake can be made in the character and intentions of that Creator whose invited guests men are upon earth, than to turn from his glorious gifts of cheerful health, wholesome food, domestic affection, and intellectual enjoyment, with abject fear and voluntary wretchedness, despising the feast that might be innocently enjoyed, for the mere garbage of self-inflicted torments, suffered in obvious opposition to the gracious intention of a liberal and most merciful Benefactor.

The newly-found parent of Beatrice, having lived during twenty years struggling for the extinction of every earthly attachment, seemed to have most perfectly succeeded at last, as the mother and daughter had but one short interview every day in the presence of Father Eustace, to whom

only the recluse ever spoke, while the priest interpreted the little she said, and suppressed most of it, according to his own extremely strict notions of secrecy and discretion. There lurked a strange look of vacant fatuity in the eye of that solitary devotee, which never seemed to gleam with any aspect of intelligence except when a look of almost childish pleasure was excited, if she gazed at her collection of relics, rosaries, medals, and images. She had also a multitudinous picture-gallery, portraits of various saints, many of which were believed, on the authentic testimony of Father Eustace, to nod, wink, and bleed, when for special occasions required so to exhibit their powers.

There are no colours, in reality, so bright as those of hope, and many a glowing picture had Beatrice in former days sanguinely drawn, according to her own Protestant views, of what a restoration might be to the affections of a long-lost parent. In such a case the blessing of a kind Providence should have been recognised in those sacred ties of earthly attachment which God has himself implanted, to which He promises his special care, and by which He illustrates his own immeasurable love to the children He has created. Beatrice had often in her day-dreams imagined the fond embrace of her own mother, the tears of joy with which they might meet, the kind eye beaming upon her, and the gentle tone of maternal affection. Here, on the contrary, in the newly-arrived visitor, was that unnatural extinction of the most innocent and commendable feelings which is inculcated as the perfection of

Popish devotion ; and when Beatrice gazed wonderingly at the cold automaton before her, contrasted with the warm glow of maternal affection she was accustomed to from Lady Edith, she felt stronger than ever in her conviction, that the true end of Christianity is to elevate but not to extinguish the best sensibilities of man. In looking, too, at the little toy-shop of relics and images to which the whole soul of this melancholy recluse seemed devoted, she felt confirmed, beyond all doubt, in her belief, that the invisible soul is created to worship an invisible God, and that the moment men require a tangible object to excite feelings of adoration, they have become idolaters.

"A gilt cross on the Bible," said Beatrice one day, in answer to a remark of Lord Iona's, "is the first step towards a wooden image in the closet. As Lady Edith says, a craving once begun for pictures, processions, crosses, and relics, the barrier is broken down that divides a spiritual from a material worship, and the roads diverge more and more every day, till the whole path to Rome is traversed."

"Yes! ending, like Sir Allan and Lady Anne, with the cowl and the veil," replied Lord Iona, in a passionately impetuous voice. "My poor cousin Anne leaves her own home and her mother's society to avoid some dangers, while she rushes into others far greater. She will learn to say the Latin prayers backwards, while she will learn also to reverse her whole ideas of right and wrong; but Anne seems urged on by Miss Turton's example to take the

irrevocable step. I cannot but wonder that any free-born English girl is not suspicious of entering a condition in which she shall be safely kept under lock and key. If nuns never repent, why bar the door at all? Poor Anne! many a sad note she will sing in her dreary cage—

‘There goes our pet nun ;
Would but her saintship leave her gold behind,
They’d give her furlough !’ ”

“I have heard Papists compare a nun entering a convent to a soldier enlisting into a regiment,” observed Beatrice; “but the soldier looks forward to regaining his liberty at last, and he generally enlists in a delirium of intoxication, not knowing, any more than a novice, what he pledges himself to when enlisted.”

“Poor Miss Turton seems delirious enough for the most forlorn hope,” said Lord Iona. “Twelve stone weight of superstition kneeling before a three inch wooden saint! Her whole faith is fanaticism, and she professes to be careless alike of encountering pleasure or pain herself, and of causing happiness or sorrow to others.”

“True!” said Miss Turton, who had been listening unobserved, and who now spoke in an excited tone, much more of affectation than of enthusiasm; “I glory in all you say! I have divested myself of myself. I do not desire health more than sickness, riches more than poverty, honour more than ignominy, a long life more than a short one, or pleasure more than pain. I dread, in short,

everything that in the smallest degree links me to this tiresome world."

"Yet, while we stay here, have we not indispensable duties? It is not the best soldier who deserts his appointed post, Miss Turton!" replied Lord Iona, in a tone of vigorous vivacity, always natural to him. "Two recruits are enlisted into a regiment for active service under the same captain. The one immediately shuts himself up in a sentry-box, where he makes war upon his own body, cutting, maiming, scourging, and starving himself till he dies in the dark, worn out by his own self-inflicted cruelties. The other, following the footsteps of his brave captain, fights in many a hard-fought field under the great leader to whom he looks for discipline and direction. He keeps the rank and position assigned to him, takes whatever food or sleep will strengthen him best for every enterprise in his master's service, and when wounded, it is not by his own hand, but by the enemies of his commander. He bravely dies at last. With many an honourable scar, and having attained a good old age, he thankfully resigns his commission into the hands of his leader, willing, when he could no longer serve, to rest, and trusting to be received with that joyful sentence at last, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' Now tell me, Miss Turton, which of those two soldiers serves his master best?"

"You are too argumentative for me, Lord Iona," replied she, looking nevertheless very belligerent. "My religion is one of feeling, but as to thinking,

Father Eustace thinks for me. I do not presume to form opinions."

"It is astonishing how few, in the present day, take that trouble on any subject," said Lord Iona, in his usual animated tone. "The newspapers think for us on politics, and the magazines on books, therefore if you can also be religious by deputy, that relieves your great mind from all mental effort. In my opinion—but I may be mistaken—a conscientious person will always act according to the dictates of his conscience, which, Miss Turton, you dare not do now. You must not presume to have a conscience! That is a stout wholesome monitor which is put to sleep for you by the priest, or it would never let you feel satisfied with a religion of delirious reveries, of fanatical rites, and of blasphemous processions."

Lord Iona shot a hasty glance from his brilliant intellectual eyes towards Lady Anne, with an evident desire that she should listen, and speaking in a tone of solemn irony, added, "Your newly adopted religion seems one of forms and of sentiment, but not of vitality. We must suppose that to Protestants, basking in the sunshine of Scriptural knowledge, a blindfold superstition like yours appears but a mournful spectacle. It is, in fact, a lifeless religion lying in state, and surrounded by the silent pomp of death!"

Lady Anne had requested that a room might be prepared for Beatrice, after Lady Edith's departure, next to her own, with the secret hope of signalling herself by making a conversion, and she seemed to

have no idea that there ever is a moment when people like to be alone. At all hours and every minute she darted into that room full of some important nothing, endeavouring to throw Beatrice off her guard, while she sometimes spoke with dignified triumph of wishing others would resign, like her, all the gaieties and frivolities of life; but she had certainly taken up in exchange the frivolities of superstition. "Ah!" said she one day in her own boudoir, after having shown to Beatrice her large collection of painted missals and prints, "you are looking at this red silk curtain and trying to guess what is behind?"

"Indeed, Lady Anne, I have no female curiosity, —none whatever! but I am dying to know," said Beatrice, smiling; "I have no objection to be told what you have so mysteriously concealed there."

Lady Anne, silently, and with rather more gravity than usual, drew aside the curtain, and displayed a small image of St. Veronica. A *prie-Dieu* chair stood before it, and Lady Anne, having opened a neatly-formed lid over the summit, drew up from this concealed recess in the chair two candlesticks. She then lighted the candles, and from the same concealed receptacle on the top of the chair, she raised up a beautifully carved little ebony crucifix, thus making a sort of extempore altar. "You see," said Lady Anne, gravely, "to a person like me, only in the middle classes of intellect, what an advantage it is to have no exercise of mind required. I go over my rosary twice a-day, and am not required to understand a syllable of it. The rest of my devotional time is filled up



with incessantly repeated *Ave Marias*. I sometimes fall asleep, for the continual sameness of these words is like the rocking of a cradle to the mind, but so easy! I would not have the labour of thinking for worlds."

"But you may lose worlds by not thinking for yourself," observed Beatrice, with friendly earnestness. "Dear Lady Anne! can you breathe, or eat, or sleep by proxy? and how much less can you exercise the nobler functions of thought and prayer by deputy! Oh! think, read, and pray for yourself."

It appeared now, as if the only object of those around was to make Beatrice forget that there is anything serious in life at all, while they beset her with every imaginable indulgence. Lady Eaglescairn spoke of poverty as if it were not only the worst of misfortunes, but the worst of crimes, and also the most contemptible, so that Beatrice could not but smile to think how very little had hitherto been necessary to make her in Lady Edith's home both happy and respected.

Miss Farinelli was surprised one evening when she entered her room to prepare for dinner, to find conspicuously laid on her toilette the most splendid dressing-box, mounted in gold and lined with crimson velvet, that she had ever seen. A card lay on the top, which bore this inscription in large letters, "The gift of an unknown relative." Beatrice felt half afraid to touch this unaccountable apparition, its arrival seemed so like magic, and her amazement increased the longer she examined it. Everything was there which the most elaborate toilet

could require, and many things for which she could scarcely devise a use at all. The most delicious perfumes and cosmetics were included, ivory-handled brushes, and even a pretty little casket of jewels, which seemed to the admiring eyes of Beatrice unsurpassably beautiful, especially a Geneva watch, studded with diamonds, scarcely larger than a shilling, with a small gold chain of the most exquisite workmanship, for suspending it round her neck.

Beatrice had been seated for several minutes in astonished contemplation of all these glittering ornaments when she suddenly felt a hand on her shoulder, while the smiling face of Lady Anne, looking somewhat flushed and excited with pleasure, appeared. "How I should like to have such unknown relatives!" she exclaimed, in a tone of frolicsome vivacity, and dropping into the easiest chair she could discover; "Father Eustace and Lady Eaglescairn will not tell me all their secrets, but what I do know is, that you are surrounded with good fairies, who all wish you well and intend to multiply their gifts to you from day to day."

"Certainly Cinderella's god-mother has been at my toilet this morning!" said Beatrice, with amazement: "I am in a state of dumb surprise!"

"And I am in a state of clairvoyance! I see a vision before me of Beatrice Farinelli, with a shower of prosperity falling on her graceful head, — the admired of all admirers, and surrounded by every luxury. Much has been, I am told, unfairly withheld from her, but like the Chancellor of the

Exchequer receiving arrears of taxes and conscience-money, it is all now to be refunded. Only be a little conformable, and you are about to become a very fortunate little personage, therefore prepare your mind to be tried with a flood of prosperity."

"It seems likely to be very necessary," replied Beatrice, with a mixture of gaiety and gravity that became her well. "I hope never to be wanting on the score of gratitude to new friends, without forgetting old ones, but this gift is so very splendid, Lady Anne, that I long to thank the giver, probably not very far off, in person."

"Do not shake your gory locks at me! I am only entrusted with the task of guessing and selecting what you might probably like best," said Lady Anne, in a tone of good-humoured self-applause. "Let me clasp on this beautiful bracelet! I merely act as chancellor to a very large exchequer. If you have a great deal of superfluous gratitude to dispose of, however, you may give me some for the exquisite taste with which I have executed the commission of your unknown relative."

"But why should he remain unknown?" asked Beatrice, almost impatiently. "I shall be worn to a thread-paper with trying to guess who sent these! Had such splendid gifts come from yourself I might more easily have welcomed them, but surely I ought not to accept any presents from those who seem afraid or ashamed to acknowledge me. Lady Anne, what do you think—what do you advise?"

"Have I lived to be asked for advice! That

really is promotion to me, who have always been considered to need it myself. I had thoughts of advertising to see whether any one wished for any, of the best quality, and here you are actually wishing to be advised. Then, to the best of my great ability, I shall do so ; yet, being employed as ambassadress, I must be as cautious as any cabinet minister. Now for it! NEVER REFUSE A GOOD OFFER! The idea is perfectly original. I might take out a patent for it, but my invention is quite at your service. Take what fortune provides, and ask no questions."

"If I have any just claim on unknown relatives, let them become known. Till they do, I prefer dependence on a known benefactress, on whom I have no earthly claim but her own generous affection," replied Beatrice, looking disappointed to receive no information. "With all that is necessary Lady Edith has liberally supplied me, and I ask no luxury but entire confidence and mutual attachment. Till these generous friends receive me and receive my thanks personally, I do not need their assistance. It would be an injury to my benefactress were I to say that I require anything from them."

"How absurdly ceremonious!" exclaimed Lady Anne, laughing. "As soon as you cease to be a heretic, they are all ready to introduce themselves to you."

"If they are to wear a mask till I comply with that condition, we must be for ever strangers," answered Beatrice, with a regretful smile. "I feel more and more the impossibility of ——"

"Oh! never mind protestations, or what you feel and think now," interrupted Lady Anne, assuming a careless tone. "Rome was not built in a day, and neither can people be converted in five minutes, or even in five weeks. My dear friend! let me put this curl in its place. There—all right—ah! you are like nobody on earth but yourself! Here comes Madame Mettarie with a show of artificial flowers. You are to choose a wreath in which to look superlatively beautiful at dinner to-day, and Madame Mettarie has made you this morning, with her patent self-acting steam-needles, a lovely dress, in which you will look quite superb."

"Lady Eaglescairn desires that I shall do nothing but attend on Mademoiselle Farinelli," said Madame Mettaire, with her eyes on the ground, in the last extreme of humility; "and I can have no greater pleasure."

"Well, I hope the pleasure may last you for life," said Lady Anne, with her most attractive smile to Beatrice. "Miss Farinelli is to stay here till she tires of us all, but we treat her so atrociously, that I wonder she tolerates us for an hour."

"It would be perfectly savage not to feel obliged for all the kindness I am overloaded with here," said Beatrice, in a tone of grateful but meditative anxiety; "yet, whatever pleasure I should naturally have felt in meeting with so much generous attention, is destroyed by my uncertainty on what foundation it all rests."

Lady Anne made no reply, being for once at a loss what to say. She had set her heart upon

performing a meritorious act, by bringing over Beatrice as a trophy of her own to Rome, and she was by no means satisfied with the success of her first attempt. Trusting much, however, to the sudden formation of an eternal friendship, on the true boarding-school model, and to her own enthusiastic representations of Romanism, she determined to persevere through every imaginable discouragement; and she did. By professing the most outrageous happiness, and that she had never known peace till after giving up all power of judging or acting for herself, Lady Anne tried to persuade Beatrice that judgment and conscience were given to rational beings in vain, and that it was the utmost presumption of any one except a priest ever to use those noblest gifts of God at all.

"You are at very unfair odds, Miss Farinelli, against the whole house; but here is a book I wish you should read," said Lady Anne, one day, to Beatrice. "It is the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Like you, she was troubled with doubts respecting the absolute authority of the Church, and its right to make us believe what is even against the evidence of our senses; but she escaped that snare by prostrating her own mind, will, and opinions, as if they were dead, before the authority of her confessor. At the close of her long life, spent in blind, headlong, unquestioning obedience, even at the total surrender of her conscience to the voice of the Church speaking through the priest, Elizabeth became, by starving and sleeplessness, so eminent a saint that she performed miracles!"

"Then she was either a lunatic, fit only for Bedlam, or an imposter deserving imprisonment!" exclaimed Lord Iona, indignantly. "I saw several such *soi-disant* saints abroad, and they were quite delirious with spiritual pride. There was no more ground for their pretence to supernatural powers than Johanna Southcote had!"

"I see daily at Heatherbrae a greater miracle than any Popish saint ever performed," added Beatrice, with affectionate enthusiasm: "Lady Edith is not raised in body off the ground during any fifty-times-repeated Ave Marias, as some of your saints are said to be; but she lives, in society or in solitude, always so under the influence of religion, that not a word she speaks, not a breath she draws, is without a pleasing consciousness that, under the benignant eye of an invisible Creator, she is answerable for a right and thankful use of all his gifts. There is gross materialism in your religion, not only in the solid and monstrous idols you worship, but also in the scourging and maltreating of your own bodies."

"Surely you cannot object to a sinner anticipating in time the punishment he deserves in eternity, and laying up a store of merit also for those he loves. You should read of St. Alphonso Liguori, who scourged himself a few years ago to such an excess, that his friends had to burst open his door, and snatch the discipline out of his hands, fearing he might cause his own death."

"And so commit suicide," interrupted Lord Iona. "Self-murder is a new virtue that I am not accus-

tomed to admire ; and a man might just as usefully thrash water to raise bubbles as beat himself."

"While Father Eustace is at his devotions, you may hear the whistlings of the lash when passing his door," added Lady Anne in a reverential whisper ; "and he always uses the prayer of St. Alphonso, 'Add torments to torments : let these be in satisfaction for my sins !' "

"Such is the pride of man, and so is he punished," said Beatrice, mournfully. "Those who will not accept a pardon as the free gift of that Saviour who came on earth to be our sole Redeemer, lose all their cheerful confidence in God's mercy, and torture themselves with useless austerities which a Hindoo might pity. One would fancy that the Popish saints had found a new edition of the Bible, with every word of the old one left out."

"If our merits are to be measured by our voluntary sufferings, a Hindoo will far out-bid the best of you," observed Lord Iona. "They hang themselves by a hook through their flesh, and swing in the air round and round for hours, and many travellers allege that they really can suspend themselves without support in the air. They starve within a mouthful of their lives, and mutilate their unfortunate bodies to perfect extinction. You do not admire these devotees, Anne, therefore why call St. Simon of the Pillar 'a glorious model,' entitled to such preeminence that beside him the brightest star grows pale, and he could spare some superfluous merit for those who had none?"

"That claim shows how much real pride there

is at the bottom of all the mock humility and strange burlesque of religion which these nominal saints display," observed Beatrice. "The plainest declarations of Scripture are against known, public, prescribed fasts, emaciating and disfiguring the body; but St. Veronica, with the most delirious vanity, writes to her neighbours, 'Anew I make myself the mediatrix between God and sinners.'"

"Ah!" said Lady Anne, eagerly, "have you not read what our Cardinal also says, in allusion to her? 'A spiritual union with certain devout souls God has been pleased to make manifest to them by more sensible signs, accompanied by formalities like those used in ordinary marriages. Of such we read in the life of the ecstatic St. Catherine of Sienna, and to this exalted dignity God was pleased to exalt Veronica, as he revealed to her.'"

"You seem to have a thousand-horse power of believing in the merits of those fabulous saints; but what you mention of St. Veronica is pride in a strange state of lunacy," observed Lord Iona, gravely. "We see in modern sisterhoods how those who begin perhaps with good intentions are gradually betrayed into such spiritual vanity as almost to claim Divine honours for themselves. There is no evidence that St. Catherine ever existed, and it would certainly be better for her that she never was born than that she ever gave countenance to any tale so blasphemous and presumptuous as her legend."

"You should see Murillo's picture of that subject," said Lady Anne, reverentially: "it is sublime;

and also his portrait of St. Sebastian, which it is quite excruciating to look at."

"I never feel edified by pictures of bodily suffering, which is much better left to our imagination," replied Beatrice, thoughtfully. "It seems part of the materialism in your church, that so much prominence is given to personal tortures. Our sympathy for the most frightful corporeal torments, great as it ought to be, and is, cannot be so intense as that excited by the mental anguish which belongs to our nobler nature. The friend who loses a limb excites a thrill of sympathising horror, but not the same melting interest as he who has lost his favourite child; for how truly does the Holy Scripture say, 'A wounded spirit, who can bear!' As the deepest sorrows and sufferings of a martyr—the sorrows of the mind—cannot be painted, I greatly prefer to blend my sympathy for his bodily and mental torments together in my own imagination, without seeing one divided from the other in dreadful scenic representation. That seems to me what Madame de Staël calls *la culte de douleur*. Religion is meant to be spiritual and invisible, not depending on pictures or statues, but on the heart and understanding; therefore Lady Edith, instead of distressing her eyes with such hideous pictures, instead of pricking herself with pins like St. Veronica, and beating herself as she did with thistles, which the Bible never recommends, keeps her body in health, and her soul in humble readiness for the daily discipline which God Himself appoints her."

"I think," said Lord Iona, in his usual rattling, heedless tone, "my own life has hitherto been made to resemble a Christmas tree; my root in the earth, my head to the sky; the gay lights glittering on every leaf or branch, and toys or bon-bons enough for a carnival to enliven the whole; but the pleasures of intellect and feeling were wanting, and these now far outweigh in my estimation all others, though these are what Father Eustace wishes to deprive you of for life. Really, Anne, your obedience to that confessor has grown so implicit now that you would, if he desired you, go up to the moon on a ladder of ropes."

"I should at least try."

"And if he asserted the very stoutest impossibilities, you would believe them to be possible. Well, if you want a testimonial to Father Eustace of your believing and doing implicitly all he desires you, refer him to my office. His legends are all pyramids reversed, resting on the smallest possible foundation."

No obvious attempt was made to dissuade Beatrice from fulfilling her promise to visit Lady Edith almost every day, but no facilities were afforded her, and a thousand little tempting excursions were planned for her, which that engagement frustrated; but when she still persisted in going, Lady Eaglescairn treated her resolution as a mere amiable weakness, a thing to be good-humouredly winked at, as it was certain to become in time a most intolerable bore. Though a carriage was at all times ready, therefore, to convey Beatrice with any party anywhere else, so that

she should explore every valley or hill within reach, and admire every old ruin or picturesque village in the county, still Heatherbrae alone seemed left always in oblivion, and no carriage ever offered itself to go there; while any passing remark these visits ever did excite, was in a tone of the most contemptuous disparagement.

That the mind of Beatrice was calm under her present ordeal cannot be imagined, yet no one could have guessed how much she really did suffer from being in constant mental opposition to all those around her who seemed in other respects so anxious that she should be pleased and happy. Complaisant by nature, she felt bound nevertheless to remain firm respecting even the most trifling word or action that involved a principle; yet to be constantly on the defensive in the society of friends was so new to her, that she felt her head at last like broken china with agitation. Beatrice felt it at times delightful beyond expression, to escape from all the party, and to proceed with her own free, springing, animated step to Heatherbrae. But that walk was not long to be taken alone, for both Sir Allan and Lord Iona had with watchful anxiety discovered the hour at which her pilgrimage usually begun, and both always happened, by a well-contrived accident, to meet her at the very same hour and on the very same spot. These two self-appointed *aides-de-camps*, though evidently jealous of each other, kept up a gay effervescence of small talk which so beguiled the long distance to Beatrice that her mind appeared to be on a mental railroad,

as the gay little party advanced pleasantly and rapidly along every successive subject of conversation as well as along the road.

"I hope," said Lord Iona the first time he intercepted Beatrice, "that you do not prefer a misanthropical walk alone to the society of an agreeable companion."

"Certainly not, if he is agreeable," answered Beatrice in a tone of merry wilful caprice. "You seem wonderfully clever at guessing my preferences."

"And some of your aversions also," added Lord Iona with a sly comic glance. "What an agreeable man Father Eustace is! I saw you looking quite ferocious at him last night when he attempted to beguile you into conversation, and how successfully you avoided him this morning; yet he is a man who never was known to fail in anything he undertook, and he has undertaken to make himself one day, sooner or later, your favourite confessor."

"Then I shall be the first person to defeat him. How strange the interest is that Father Eustace has always betrayed rather than acknowledged in me!" said Beatrice in a meditative tone. "He is one of the few persons I have known, by sight, at least, from infancy, and every year has caused me to distrust him more. What can he know about me?"

"As nearly as I can guess, I cannot tell; but, Beatrice," said Sir Allan with his own peculiar and rather melancholy smile, "I hope that in friendship you resemble Aladdin with the lamps in preferring old ones to new."

"That depends on the spirit that attends on the lamp. If it be a good spirit, then, Allan, I welcome every old remembrance belonging to it; but the little I do understand of Father Eustace would make me almost equally dread his friendship or his enmity," replied Beatrice. "Those he pretends to lead forward in religion appear to go on, like the old pilgrim to Jerusalem, retreating two steps for every one they advance. I cannot conceive, Allan, how you can trust a man so evidently deceitful."

"If I am deceived that is his fault, not mine. In our church we throw off all individual responsibility, and I find it a great relief. If our Bishop teach wrong, it is the Bishop's fault, not ours, and even if I fancy I know better, my obvious duty is to obey the church."

"What a fatal mistake and very strange delusion!" exclaimed Beatrice. "On the same principle, if that sign-post placed there by the magistrate were to say that this road leads to London instead of to Inverness, you would be bound to travel that way to London even though you knew that it was a false direction."

"The more you look into this extraordinary world, Beatrice, the more extraordinary it is, and the more solemn to think that we make a part of that great mystery which only at death we shall fully comprehend. How often I think of Swift shortly before he went mad, frantically stamping on a human grave and exclaiming, 'Who can penetrate the secret that lies here!'"

"Last month I saw three balloons ascend at once from Vauxhall, with their living cargo," said Lord Iona, "and I could not but think, if death were such an ascent as that—if without pain, or fear, or suffering we floated triumphantly away, amidst the cheers and waving handkerchiefs of surrounding friends, never to behold us more, how strange an alteration it would make in every feeling of our mortal life, and in every anticipation of its end."

"True, and I could then understand what people mean by talking of a triumphant death," observed Beatrice. "Such is not the feeling permitted to man under present circumstances. Everything most humbling to human nature is crowded into the last scene of life—a vivid remembrance of our sins, an acute sense of bodily suffering, an entire dependence on the kindness of our attendants, a coming separation from all we have loved or seen on earth, a yawning grave, and a solemn anticipation of that world to come which we must soon and certainly enter."

"Yes," added Lord Iona, "death is the last—the very last punishment inflicted on Christians for their sins, and as such to be received with solemn submission; but even those best prepared might nevertheless be inclined to say, as old Dr. Andrews did on his death-bed, 'I have never been able to look on the King of Terrors as my friend.'"

"How many mere beef and mutton people there are in the world, who seem satisfied to eat, drink, and be merry all their days without considering

what a solemn thing life is," added Sir Allan. "I could not name a single man on earth who lives up to his full powers of usefulness, happiness, and hope."

"Well, you are a good-natured misanthrope; but I could remind you, Allan, of one woman who does, and we shall in a few minutes see her," said Beatrice with her own smile so full of mind and meaning. "You know as well as I the excellence of dear Aunt Edith."

Lord Iona looked at Beatrice radiant in youthful enthusiasm,—and who would not have admired the star-like brightness of her eyes, her lips scarlet as winter-berries, her teeth white and regular as pearls, the flush of health on her cheek, and the torrent of natural ringlets waving in the breeze? "True," said he, "Lady Edith and all belonging to her can stand a microscopic survey. But as for Father Eustace, who expects hereafter to be canonized, if I were his valet the hero could not have had more frequent downfalls in my estimation. Popish saints look well sometimes at a distance stuck up in a niche, but put them to the test of a close intimacy, and we find in what coarse clay they are frequently made, and how hideously deformed they often are, as in the case of my father's favourite domestic confessor, whose history and adventures, if properly told, would do much for the Protestant cause.

"None ever fear'd that the truth should be known,
Save them whom the truth would indict."

"Now that you are here, at last restored to us,

Allan, and for once away from Mr. Ambrose, we must all compare notes together on what we have done, thought, heard, said, and seen since you left home, said Beatrice. "We shall begin as people do in the Arabian Nights, by drawing up from oblivion all the lost years of your absence."

"Quite right," observed Lord Iona; "in conversation, McAlpine, we must all add what we can to the pool, and you owe us a long arrear. Pray, Sir Allan, give us, along with much that will be no doubt very improving, a little pleasant nonsense."

"I leave that to others. The feelings of many are fleeting as the breath that utters them, but mine are now very mournful," said Sir Allan, thoughtfully, while Beatrice listened with a commiserating sigh. "The sight of these old haunts, Iona, has made me sad beyond all power of expression. I remember once a gay and happy boy here in a state of sun-bright felicity, protected from every evil, indulged in every innocent pleasure, loved and cherished, and almost idolised. I see him now old before his time, broken in spirit, frustrated in hope, and done already with life. It is my own voluntary act. Yet at this moment I do feel how strange is the contrast. I cannot but ask myself, in the absence of that admirable uncle, who usually supports my resolution, Is it indeed my duty to be what I am rather than what I might be?"

"My dear friend, as our old huntsman would say, we must 'hark you back.' Now listen well, for I mean to be most tremendously impressive,"

replied Lord Iona earnestly. "Conscience tells you loudly, M^cAlpine, that you have a part to act for yourself in life, and Father Eustace, backed by Mr. Ambrose, says you have not. Conscience bids you come forth such a chief of M^cAlpine as Sir Evan once was, but Father Eustace bids you burrow like a mole in a cell, leaving the priest himself to live and act for you. Say, which is right? It was well said that a monk is a man who commits himself to prison for being religious; and certainly it is thought punishment enough for criminals to have solitary imprisonment for one month only. Father Eustace would make you no more fit to fulfil the purpose for which you were made, than a torn umbrella, or a balloon with a hole in it. Are not your limbs given you to walk with? Are not your eyes given you to see with? and has your Creator given you an intellect and conscience that are not your own? Those who would urge the extinction of these are the Thugs of Christendom."

"Macbeth says, 'The times have been that when the brains were out the man would die, and there an end,'" replied Beatrice. "But Romanism wages a fierce war of extermination against the human mind, and makes its votary a mere breathing automaton, not allowed upon his own judgment to know black from white, or right from wrong, or truth from fiction. The priests put out the eyes of his understanding, that he may be led or driven blindfold by others."

"Do you remember, M^cAlpine, my cousins, the

Hamiltons, at Harrow?" asked Lord Iona. "There were seven brothers, you know, all the most idle, mischievous, rattle-pated boys on the face of this good-for-nothing world of ours. They were in perpetual scrapes and under well-deserved punishment. Well, one became a sailor, another a soldier, another a diplomatist; but Ronald, number four, the greatest scamp of all, has now become a Popish priest, and is treated with almost divine honours in the Duke of Highgate's family, where he is appointed confessor. I never was more astonished in my life than when I went this summer to spend a week at Highgate House, and first caught a twinkle of my cousin Ronald's rogueish eye endeavouring to look me down by an over-done air of the most austere hypocrisy. I had heard the Crofton girls talking in raptures, during luncheon, of 'Father Ignatius,' but conceive my consternation to see Ronald, whom I had last parted with on the top of a ladder robbing his father's old pear-tree, now promoted to act as the infallible director of everybody's conscience! I wonder who he confesses to himself, as Ronald's confessor will have no sinecure, or he is not Ronald Hamilton."

"But," said Sir Allan gravely, "Father Ignatius is now a perfect saint."

"He is no more a saint than Cincinnatus," interrupted Lord Iona impetuously. "I know my cousin thoroughly. The title of 'Father' in the sense used by Papists should be assumed by no human being."

"But," observed Beatrice, "every Popish priest

is anxious to assume it, by which he acquires a sort of dignity, as if that title were a kind of spiritual peerage."

"My cousin, Father Ronald Hamilton, throws a drapery of empty observances over the most hollow-hearted hypocrisy. His observances of religion, replete with strange attitudes and tedious repetitions, at the Duke of Highgate's, remind me of the absurd ceremonies in the court of China. I am the only person in this party always in the right, and you may depend on what I say now, that it is only in half-civilized palaces that you see bodily prostrations, and all the over-done dressing and decoration, which do no more real honour to the sovereign than the simpler homage paid to our monarch at the English court. There the superstitions of etiquette have long been banished by more enlightened views of what is real in the reverence of heart and intellect, due from an attached subject to his divinely appointed ruler. Ronald Hamilton's religion was without spiritual life, like a finely dressed doll; and on the contrary that which I have seen since at Lady Edith Tremorne's has in it a living spirit of prayer, and a living body of good actions. Had I seen no better religion than Ronald Hamilton's, at Highgate House, and what I see nearer home, I should soon have fallen into infidelity. My downward course was stopped at Heatherbrae."

Beatrice felt touched to the soul by this unexpected tribute to her beloved benefactress, so gracefully spoken, while it was so evidently sincere,

and when she met the brilliant glance of Lord Iona's eyes fixed upon herself, a scarlet blush overspread her countenance, indicating the many mingled emotions which agitated her mind.

"Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd brighter from her eyes—
They were so soft—so beautiful—and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies."

With a vivid impression on their minds of the silent, emaciated, self-absorbed devotee, who claimed Beatrice at Eaglescairn, she and her two companions entered the sunny little garden at Heatherbrae, and walked up to the low diamond-latticed casement at which she usually entered Lady Edith's sitting-room from the shrubbery. It was a quiet, loveable, domestic-looking boudoir, in which Beatrice had spent many a pleasant hour in admiring her favourite flower-beds, and in listening to the concert of thrushes and linnets concealed in the dark shades of the overhanging oaks. There even the shrill scream of the peacock, the cawing of an hundred rooks, and the early note of the cuckoo were pleasant to those who delighted in all the sights and sounds of nature, but pleasant above all to the warm heart of Beatrice in her happy home had always been the love of that more than mother, Lady Edith, to whom her attachment was "fond without art, and kind without deceit."

Looking unobserved through the little glass folding-door at Heatherbrae, Beatrice and her two animated companions witnessed such a scene of

single-hearted benevolence, as well as of rational happiness, founded on reason and duty, that they silently paused for several minutes, admiringly to contemplate it. The monitor's class of elder girls from the village school had assembled in Lady Edith's boudoir to receive her own instructions, and she, dressed simply, though suitably to her dignified position, was talking to them on their future duties in life. Every young face seemed to have caught a spark of intelligence from hers, as the fine intellectual expression of Lady Edith's eyes became softened into a warm glow of kindness, when fixed on those whom it was her fervent wish to enlighten with a knowledge as well as with a love of the truth.

The children, after their cold walk from Clannarina, had been welcomed with a hearty dinner of warm broth, that their bodies as well as their minds might be in full vigour to reap all the benefit intended them, while Lady Edith now, with her usual concentration and energy of purpose, read and explained to them those Holy Scriptures, suited like the air we breathe, the water we drink, or the sunshine we enjoy, to give life, nourishment, and happiness, wherever they are known. The fine countenance of Lady Edith became lighted up with a look of the brightest intelligence, while she pointed out how the books of Nature, Revelation, and Providence explained each other, and are meant, by the Creator who made them, to be studied and understood by all His rational creatures.

The little half-smile of respectful interest with which Lady Edith's young pupils listened to her, suddenly spread over their whole faces in a blaze of sunshine, when they perceived Beatrice nodding to them at the window, and as she stepped into the room all discipline was forgotten in a joyful rush of her little pupils to welcome her, and Lady Edith, equally delighted, closed her book and hurriedly rose to welcome Beatrice with joyful rapture.

"And Allan, too!" she exclaimed, holding out her hand to the young Chief, but tears which she tried to hide filled her eyes as she did so; "Allan, you are welcome as sunshine. If I might have selected any pleasure that would make me happiest to-day, should it not have been such a visit as this from you and your two companions? Yes! this unexpected sight of you, Allan, is a cordial to the heart that has loved you longest and best on earth now."

"I believe we always love most deeply those we have benefited," answered Sir Allan, in a tone of affectionate respect; "therefore, every recollection of my happy boyhood tells my heart how much Aunt Edith must love me! Even yet my whole mind and heart seem to dilate with new vigour as I look at you. Old times, old feelings, old affections, revive in these beloved old scenes! How dear to me is every recollection now crowding into my memory! Oh! surely this is as it should be; not the extinction of nature, but the purifying of all its best impulses; not the prostration of

intellect, but its highest elevation ; not the crushing down of earthly affections, but the embellishing of them all with cheerful, hopeful, trusting piety."

" True, M^cAlpine, and long may you think so," added Lord Iona, warmly ; " instead of looking for magical miracles, such as seeing people, like Mahomet's coffin, suspended in the air during their often-repeated Ave Marias, let us rather look for the miracle of an elevated understanding, raised above all that is seen and temporal, to appreciate the chief glory of our own nature as about to become connected with what is unseen and eternal. I more and more observe the immeasurable superiority of a spiritual over a material worship. Above all things on earth, M^cAlpine, beware of letting your mind collapse finally into Jesuitism, for then you will be surrounded with keepers who feed your delirium incessantly, and be put in some asylum where there is no wish to cure you, but only such hard treatment, starving, scourging, and solitude, as is exploded now even in prisons and mad-houses."

" If we are preserved from such a fate," said Beatrice, gratefully, laying her hand on the arm of Lady Edith with a look of thrilling emotion, " I see the benefactress to whose instructions my own present safety is owing. Never did you expect, Aunt Edith, that I should need as I do now all the warnings you gave us, but you fortified the garrison before it was attacked. Oh that my affection could return an hundredth part of the good you have done me !"

" How much more than repaid I am, my own

Beatrice, for whatever a kind Providence privileged me to do for you! It has long been the greatest happiness of my life, never for one instant to doubt your affection, or to find it wanting."

"It would break my heart if you ever did! No, Aunt Edith, years and experience only prove more and more what I owe you."

"And, Beatrice, my beloved girl! do I owe nothing to you? If to feel a deep unalterable affection for one who richly deserves it, be the happiest of all earthly pleasures, do I not owe such a blessing to yourself? My own dear Beatrice, you must be loved everywhere, but nowhere can you be loved and prayed for as you are here. I feel from the bottom of my heart the steady, well-principled affection that brings you home according to our agreement almost every day, and I long ardently for that appointed day which restores you almost to me entirely. Give me

"Something to love, to lean upon, to clasp
Affection's tendrils round."

CHAPTER IV.

"Affections trampled on and hopes destroy'd,
Tears wrung from very bitterness, and sighs
That waste the breath of life—these all were here."

L. E. L.

THE long-looked-for day came at last, on which Beatrice was to be restored to her old, quiet, well-beloved home; and though there was in the depths of her heart an unacknowledged feeling of regret at losing the too agreeable society of Lord Iona, she felt in her still mysterious unclaimed state, it were best not to remain in the way of becoming more intimate with him, nor more exposed to the influence of those who were leaving no means untried to subvert her faith and principles. Hints were multiplied more and more now, of what she lost by remaining obstinately deaf, as well as blind to her own interest, and Father Eustace, by using the sacred name of her silent mother, obliged Beatrice to hear, with some attention, what was supposed to come from a parent.

"Why should there be any stranger priest as a medium of communication between us?" asked Beatrice, indignantly. "Have we not both been endowed with eyes and ears? If I have a mother,

let her speak to me. You have the power to grant this."

"Never, while you remain an obstinate heretic! Never!" replied the priest, in a stern undertone.

"Then truly I think, that for malice and vengeance a Cherokee Indian might take lessons from you," answered Beatrice, indignantly. "What animal is there that does not communicate with its own progeny? and shall a rational mother alone be deprived of the happiness which belongs to the very lowest animals?"

"Some of our most eminent saints on earth, Miss Farinelli, being resolved to humble that pride of human intellect which is too apt to arise in the natural mind, have spent months in imitating such animals as you speak of. There were those once, who condemned themselves as a penance to purr like a cat, to go on all-fours, and even to catch mice ——"

"Well! I could not do that, as I am a dreadful coward for mice," interrupted Beatrice, unable to suppress a smile; "and often when I have tremblingly watched one darting along the floor, or springing on my bed, I have thought, if the least of God's creatures can inspire me with such fear, what amount of awe should I not feel for that Creator who formed the smallest as well as the greatest of living things, but who gave me a nature superior to them all! It can never become an acceptable sacrifice that we should abjure this privilege, and level ourselves down into mere unthinking irrational brutes. I value highly the

honour of man, in being formed after the image of God, and it seems to my Protestant mind, that those best obey His intentions who aim at a perfect resemblance to Him, as manifested in the human nature of our Divine Saviour."

When Beatrice wished after luncheon, though the morning now became one ceaseless cascade of rain, to depart, and had all her baggage ready, it seemed as if all Lady Eaglescairn's numerous carriages, either had broken springs or sprained ankles, or were in some way disabled from use, and Beatrice, in a fit of determined independence, had made up her mind that she would reduce her demand to a wheelbarrow for her trunk, and an umbrella for herself, that she might walk to Heatherbrae in pedestrian style, rather than disappoint Lady Edith. Lady Anne now suddenly came forward with a most winning smile, and a proposal that Miss Farinelli and all her belongings should be conveyed home in her carriage. This offer was most gladly accepted; but while Beatrice expressed her gratitude and pleasure at so timely a proposal, she was surprised to observe in the eye of her new friend, Lady Anne, a laughing, and what might almost be called a larking expression of fun, frolic and mischief, for which she felt totally at a loss to account.

Lady Anne was going that day to Inverness, much against the judgment and wishes of Lady Stratharden; but any check-string that a mother could apply would have been weaker than a spider's web, as she went in obedience to an injunction

from Father Eustace, to be present at the ceremony of Miss Turton taking the veil, respecting which there had been for several days past a grand note of preparation at Eaglescairn. The heroine of the day had her vain mind as filled with visions of temporary *éclat* as the most juvenile bride who marries for the trousseau, the favours, and the wedding cake. The Popish ceremony of a nun taking the veil, is a sort of Barmecide's feast to represent an actual marriage, and Miss Turton already saw before her crowds filling the chapel, the pathway strewn with flowers, the altar decorated with gold, the bridal dress, the universal applause, the gaze of strangers, the procession of nuns, the blessing of bishops, the flattery of Father Eustace, and the tears of any friends she had to mourn for her living death. Miss Turton had taken a picturesque farewell, on the previous day, of all those who were not intending to be present at the ceremony, where she was to perform as "the show, the idol of the day," and she departed, dressed with much more than her usual taste, while she waved her handkerchief; and smiling her last smile, affected the most extravagant spirits. A rumour accidentally reached Beatrice that Bessie McRonald was to accompany Miss Turton in the carriage, and watching privately from the window of her own room, she had seen a figure cowering in the extreme corner, shrunk and wasted, as if by long-endured consumption, and a face pale and corpse-like as a spirit, but so lovely yet, that wan and pallid as it appeared, it was beautiful as no other face, the blue eyes so bright,

the white teeth so dazzling, the rich brown hair dropping in a torrent of natural ringlets on the marble cheek. Yes! it was Bessie McRonald, seen probably for the last time, and as Beatrice gazed at her old favourite, comparing what she was with what she might have been, the tears sprang to her eyes, and she turned hopelessly and most indignantly away.

Robert Carre, too, must have heard, with the watchfulness of devoted affection, that Bessie was about to depart from that neighbourhood for ever, and he stood near the park-gate as the carriage passed. How long and anxiously he had waited to hear the sound of those carriage-wheels! and now big drops of agony started out on his massive forehead; his hat was slouched over his face, and his attitude was one of the deepest dejection. While the lodge-keeper slowly unlocked the heavy iron gate, and swung it open, Miss Turton's conveyance stopped for an instant. Then young Carre rushed forward to the window next poor Bessie, the object of all his deep unalterable affection, and said in accents of wringing anguish, while his whole face was convulsed with irrepressible emotion, "Farewell, Bessie, farewell for ever! We meet no more: yet, Bessie, still dear to me, if ever you want a friend, remember Robert Carre. I would have lived for you; and I could die to serve you now."

The carriage rolled on, and long did Bessie lie fainting and totally insensible at the feet of Miss Turton, who felt the superiority of her own mind in having at once abandoned every human feeling

and all the sensibilities of life, for a picturesque dress and a solitary cell, in which to study the difficult art of doing nothing useful, rational, or cheerful.

“Narrow and dark, nought through the gloom discern’d,
Nought save the crucifix, the rosary,
And the grey habit lying by to shroud
Her beauty and her grace.”—*Rogers*.

When Beatrice had been comfortably seated in the elegant, well-stuffed and well-hung carriage of Lady Anne, while her baggage was placed in the boot, Lord Iona, who had handed her in, presented her with the most beautiful bouquet that ever grew in any conservatory, and begged that Miss Farinelli would present his most respectful as well as his most kind remembrances to Lady Edith, on whom he would do himself the honour of calling next day. Beatrice coloured, smiled, and bent over her flowers with a complexion that eclipsed the brightest among them; and as the carriage drove on, she fell into the most pleasing little reverie in the world; which so occupied her thoughts that she did not look up till they had driven some miles, and she expected to see the picturesque chimneys of Heatherbrae.

Beatrice gave an exclamation of perplexity and surprise when, after glancing round, she found herself driving over a large open common perfectly unknown to her, and she instantly sprang forward to pull the check-string, saying “Lady Anne, your coachman must have mistaken the road to Heatherbrae.”

“Not at all! Thomas has my orders and knows

perfectly what he is about," replied Lady Anne, in a tone of suppressed laughter, and Beatrice felt surprised to see her companion's whole countenance glittering with the same smile of fun and frolic which she had observed there in the morning. "The fact is, Miss Farinelli, that I thought you might like to see the field of Culloden, and there it is!"

"Culloden!" exclaimed Beatrice, starting with amazement, "that is nearly five miles off our road!"

"Not a yard! not a finger-length!" answered Lady Anne, looking at Beatrice with a winning smile, which soon turned into an almost hysterical fit of laughter. "Pray do look less astonished. It is too diverting! But now, like a Member of Parliament, I must rise to explain. The truth is, that I am, you know, a spoiled child, accustomed to my own way, and will have it, *coute qui coute*!"

"Not after you take the veil," answered Beatrice, with a smiling earnestness of voice and manner. "In a convent, neither you nor Miss Turton, much as you both like your own way now, can hope for any choice in what you shall read, write, speak, think, love, hate, or do,—not even in what you eat or drink,—whom you speak to, and what you say to them."

"The more reason why I should use my power over you and others as long as it lasts," continued Lady Anne, in a light jesting tone, and her bright laughing eye looked like that of a wild gazelle; "I am always afraid of giving myself heiress-airs, and

have not, therefore, done many things that I should have liked to do; but to-day I have really indulged myself in a whim!"

The carriage continued rumbling and jolting over some very indifferent road, while Beatrice still held the check-string, and Lady Anne laughingly grasped her hand so as to prevent her drawing it. Still she seemed deferring her promised explanation, till at length the earnestness with which Beatrice requested to be enlightened obliged her to speak, which she did now with some little trepidation, though still in agonies of suppressed laughter.

"This is entirely a plan of my own, and Father Eustace's! Not another mortal knows of it. We shall be back in two days; but I felt sure, if you had Prince Houssein's glass, you would like a single peep into —, where I am going. You have twice contumaciously refused to come with me, and see my darling, Miss Turton, take the veil; but I was resolute all the time that you shall. Yesterday I wrote to tell 'Aunt Edith' that you are accompanying me to Inverness, on particular business, and Father Eustace undertook himself to deliver my note. Now, pray do not look so scared! you are as safe with me as any mummy in a glass-case. We have Father Ambrose on the dicky behind, and Father Eustace follows to-morrow. How speechless you are with astonishment. Well; it certainly is an odd elopement of mine, to kidnap you, and set off myself with such an escort."

Beatrice was too much overwhelmed with really indignant astonishment to articulate another word, but her eyes spoke volumes of most vexatious perplexity, while her colour went and came, her heart beat almost audibly, and she actually gasped for breath. Still the chariot rolled rapidly on, the driver frantically cracked his whip, and Lady Anne lay back in her carriage laughing in a perfect agony of delight, which was renewed every time she glanced round, with brimming eyes and quivering dimples at her startled and most unwilling companion.

"I thought you would be surprised!" she exclaimed at last, and bursting out afresh into perfectly convulsive laughter, which was partly nervous now, as she saw that Beatrice looked seriously dissatisfied. "I really am not quite insane, Miss Farinelli; but from the moment when Father Eustace casually mentioned the idea of thus kidnapping you, in jest, the temptation became quite irresistible! Fancy poor me, going alone to such a scene, Miss Turton for the first time absent, a place in my carriage empty, your baggage ready packed, and yourself in distress for a conveyance. I felt certain, darling, that, as Father Eustace said, the only obstacle to prevent your accepting my invitation would be the fear of offending your good old Duenna, Lady Edith. I delight in her too; she wears the most beautiful snow-white hair I ever saw, and the whitest cap. When I am as old, what a tidy old thing I shall be! The dress in our nunnery you will admire excessively."

"Lady Anne," interrupted Beatrice, with gentle firmness, "I cannot go to witness a scene revolting to my whole feelings and principles! It is not merely the opinion of my best friend on earth, Lady Edith, that influences me, though that is, and ought to be, my chief guide on every occasion, —but indeed, Lady Anne, my own heart and conscience forbid."

"Never mind what they forbid! as Father Eustace says, we have no right to consult either. He would soon relieve you of all that trouble, therefore now you must *monte en croupe, et gallope avec moi.*"

"Impossible! I would rather hire that man breaking stones on the road, to roll me back on his truck, with his plaid to keep me dry, than trust myself in a convent. How do I know that they will ever let me out?"

"Will you come into my parlour?"
Said the spider to the fly;
'No, thank you, sir, I really feel
No curiosity!'"

"It is too late now to stop," replied Lady Anne in a tone of good-humoured wilfulness. "You lost a whole mile in staring with astonishment at me, instead of pulling the string. No! we are miles and miles on the road now. I never let myself be overruled, especially in my own carriage, and my ill used prisoner will be clever indeed if she escapes me, till I bring her back on Saturday."

"How could you think of such a thing as this?" exclaimed Beatrice in real distress.

"I did not think of it! The whole credit belongs to Father Eustace, who really has a great kindness for you, and who thought the change of scene would do you good. Nothing does people so much good as an agreeable surprise sometimes!" replied Lady Anne, with an incorrigible laugh. "It should be put down, as your admirer Lord Iona says, in every Doctor's prescription. There, what a beautiful colour has rushed into your face! No rose could vie with it. Now do join the 'Tis-well-its-no-worse school.' Be conformable."

Beatrice leaned thoughtfully back in the carriage, more perplexed than she had ever expected to be in her life; while Lady Anne rattled on with apparent heedlessness. "There never will or can be a better opportunity for you to see a nun make her profession, and every intelligent person should see everything in life once. Half my pleasure on this occasion is in your astonishment. I am serving you against your will: for on we go, without drawing bridle now, to Inverness."

"Lady Anne! Will nothing ever take the mischief out of your odd, elfish, ridiculous spirit? I cannot leave Aunt Edith so unexpectedly, and enter such a scene, among persons that I consider religiously insane," said Beatrice, very seriously. "I would as willingly accompany Mr. Green in his balloon. It is quite impossible."

"Well, I positively promise you never to do anything that is quite impossible! I make it a rule not to do absolute impossibilities,—indeed, there are in this world none: the family is extinct,"

answered Lady Anne, with a pouting smile of good-humoured defiance, and afterwards talking on so volubly, that to interrupt her was obviously impracticable—"What a sight this will be for us both! I never saw the ceremony of a nun taking the veil, though I am so soon to act the principal part in such a scene myself. I do long for the day! Miss Turton's dress is only to be of Honiton lace, but mine shall be Brussels, and such a perfect love of a wreath—myrtle and orange flowers! Miss Turton wished me to have jessamine, like her own, but by that time I hope to have real conservatory orange-blossoms, as the perfume is so delicious. My bouquet is already bespoke from Covent Garden market. Father Eustace has taken such a kind interest in it."

"They adorn you with flowers for the sacrifice!" said Beatrice, a sudden emotion of pity banishing, for the moment, every feeling of personal resentment at the strange manœuvre practised upon her; "but your happiness will fade as rapidly and as surely as your orange-blossoms. Miss Turton talked grandly about giving up the world for pleasures unmingled with earthly dross; but, being so much older than you, she has thirty years less to deplore her mistake in. I would as willingly have gone to see the bride of the mistletoe-bough step into her chest, as to see you take the wrong veil; but Miss Turton has had more time to look before she leaps."

"True," interrupted Lady Anne, with a heedless laugh; "she has lived in a whirlpool of society

and amusements, till her hair has grown very grey; she detests all her relations, therefore she does not mind forsaking them; and she never continued any friendship with any one except myself for more than two months. Miss Turton 'mopes for convents, because earth's grapes are sour.' Such admirers as might fall to her share now would probably be old, ugly, and vulgar, with no better home to offer her than a *troisième* garret, with nothing per annum, or a little damp, rheumatic cottage, surrounded by a hedge of sweetbriars. How different that insignificant fate would be from what I shall perhaps resign—Cairngorum Castle and Sir Allan McAlpine!"

These last words seemed to have sprung to the lips of Lady Anne almost unconsciously; for, after she became aware of having uttered them, a flood of scarlet dyed her cheeks, and she turned hurriedly away to look at her ebony beads, saying, as if her whole heart were occupied with the subject, "My rosary will be splendid! It is presented by the lady abbess of St. Ignatia,—such a charming, never-to-be-sufficiently loved and trusted person."

"The former abbess of that convent disappeared very unaccountably, did she not?" asked Beatrice, in a tone of mysterious awe. "One never knows, in these altered times, what to believe, because the Jesuits purposely circulate stories against themselves, to have a pretext for afterwards publicly contradicting them. An apostate Protestant clergyman will spread a report that he is returning to our Church, merely that he may bring his forgot-

ten name into notice again, and publish some mischievous letter to say that he never knew happiness before he went to Rome. By such means, when people hear a true story, they remember some that turned out false; and, in the general confusion so skilfully created, men tire of crediting actual facts."

"Then you really are a believer in buried-alive nuns, and in rebellious novices being often shut up as mad?"

"Of course! and you were born yesterday, Lady Anne, if you do not know that such things really do occur," replied Beatrice, boldly. "No one doubts, I believe, about the young orphan-heiress at Friburg, who was persuaded, some years ago, by a Jesuit confessor to take the veil. No more was heard of her during fourteen years, when a public investigation became called for: search was made, and this poor girl was found lying upon filthy straw in a damp cellar, with such food beside her as was unfit for the lowest animal. If you once disappear within the walls of St. Ignatia, Lady Anne, giving up your name, and losing your identity, who on earth can ever afterwards release you from the tyranny of men, and from their vices? Do you never imagine the possibility of being utterly and entirely deceived—utterly wrong?"

"You were born to set everything to rights in this world, and you seem deeply read in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances," observed Lady Anne, laughing heartily. "My dear Miss Farinelli, you really will bring on a fit of the horrors! I see your hair rising

on end with consternation, and you must have it smoothed down again. Make your mind quite easy; for Father Eustace has by this time, I hope, given bail to Lady Edith for your re-appearance on Saturday in her little, dull old Protestant home; so fear nothing."

"Lady Anne, I cannot consent to be caged in that utterly-to-be-abhorred convent for a single night—no, not for an hour!" replied Beatrice, turning her clear, steadfast eye towards her laughing companion. "Those who would shun a fox do not enter his den. How do I know that they will ever let me out? If you were taking me to a lunatic-asylum, I should know that twice a-year the law reaches to its inmost recesses, and I should be set at liberty, as being entitled to breathe the free air; but if, by force or fraud, I once became a 'sister Bridget,' or 'sister Agnes,' then who on earth has any right or power to rescue me, if I were thrown into a damp, cobwebbed, subterranean cell, in cold and darkness, on the pretext, perhaps, that I was insane, and kept there till I died? Father Eustace may perhaps never even tell Lady Edith exactly where to look for me; and how then am I ever to escape?"

Lady Anne looked for a moment startled and perplexed, and then added, very seriously, "Miss Farinelli, if this were my death-oath, I could assure you, that not for a minute, or half a minute, shall you be detained here after Saturday. But are you not ashamed of liking that weary world so well as to return to it?"

"No more ashamed than I would be of wishing to awake from a feverish dream," replied Beatrice. "And I shall say to Father Eustace when we meet—

"Come tell me, monk, about your magic gardens,
Where not a stringy head of kale is cut,
But breeds a vision or a revelation."

Meanwhile nothing ever was further from the intentions of Father Eustace than to enlighten Lady Edith as to the whereabouts of Beatrice. His promise to Lady Anne, that he would immediately deliver her note, clearly militated against the interests of his church, and therefore, of course, on no account was it to be performed. Lady Edith had, in fact, (as he argued to himself,) no legal right whatever, any more than himself, over a foundling such as Beatrice; and, seeing that it would particularly suit his purposes to detain Miss Farinelli some time in the convent, he resolved that there she should remain.

It might be difficult to pacify Lady Anne, when she discovered that her friendship had been made the means of entrapping Beatrice more seriously than she ever intended; but Father Eustace knew his own power over those who had once confessed to him, and moreover, he knew so well all the little weak sides of his lively, heedless penitent, that he felt a pleasant consciousness of being able to manage her perfectly. Whatever she said or thought, however, his great mind was made up, that the convent of St. Ignatia should be a prison

to Beatrice as long as he could, by fair means or very doubtful ones, keep her in captivity there: as he had very important reasons of his own why, during the few remaining days or hours of Lord Eaglescairn's life, she should be kept from the possibility of seeing the dying peer.

Lady Edith rose that day with a delightful consciousness that the time had come on which it was promised that Beatrice should be restored to her old, cheerful, well-beloved home: and it was a morning of glorious beauty. The blue mountains were lighted up on their dark precipitous sides with patches of sunshine—the trees were putting out their early leaves,—it was a perfect flower-show among the crocuses, and a musical festival among the birds.

Lady Edith was in a most unusual fidget of happiness. The day was to be a perfect jubilee of felicity at Heatherbrae, therefore she gave a holiday to her school, an additional watering to her geraniums, and a double feed to her poultry. She adorned Beatrice's writing-table with the choicest flowers, and ordered tea to be brought up the instant her welcome guest arrived. She stirred the sulky slumbering fire into its brightest blaze, drew up all the blinds, and lighted up her own countenance with smiles of anticipated joy. It was impossible to read, and even work was too sedentary for the renewed animation of her spirits, and she wandered as anxiously from window to window as a disappointed sportsman on a rainy day. Hours rolled heavily away,—oh, how heavily! She paced

up and down her little garden with anxious restlessness which could not repose, listening with intense eagerness to every distant sound, and mistaking every noise for the roll of carriage-wheels.

"Anne, sister Anne," did not look out more in vain, however, than Lady Edith that day, who was not even rewarded by seeing a cloud of dust on the road. Hours passed on; but Lady Edith, still sanguine, smiled at her own impatience, and thought Lady Eaglescairn had delayed sending Beatrice till she took her own airing, and could bring her young guest, according to promise, home.

Evening closed in, and twilight had darkened into night: but still Lady Edith would not allow herself to suspect that Beatrice could have been prevailed on to disappoint her without even a message to state the reason; therefore the endless day was followed by an endless evening of frustrated hope, during which every sound seemed to her listening ear like the roll of carriage-wheels. Hope deferred had made the heart of Lady Edith sick indeed; but when twelve o'clock struck, every sanguine promise she had made to herself of Beatrice at last appearing, died out: she therefore retired to rest with a consoling resolution to visit Eaglescairn Castle early next morning, and there to reclaim the beloved child of her adoption.

Lady Edith's whole spirit was now on fire with a just indignation at the conduct of those who were evidently endeavouring to make a final division between herself and her beloved Beatrice, in whose affection she felt the most unalterable confidence.

This feeling composed her mind, so that she had fallen into a slumber, disturbed and agitated, but still in some degree refreshing, when she was suddenly awakened about three in the morning by a sound of carriage-wheels grinding along the gravel, immediately below her window. Springing out of bed, she eagerly opened the sash, looked joyfully out, and seeing Lady Eaglescairn's chariot close beneath, she told the coachman to wait there as she would summon her servants to admit Miss Farinelli. Not a doubt crossed her mind that Beatrice was there, though she wondered much not to hear her voice in reply, and she was about to close the casement when a groom, who accompanied the carriage, rapidly dismounted from the box, and respectfully touching his hat as he hurried up to the window, said—

“We are come to fetch Lady Edith Tremorne. Not a moment is to be lost! A lady at the Castle is dying! Dr. M^cIndre says she has scarcely an hour to live. I was desired to say that her last wish is to see Lady Edith.”

“Who is she? Tell me who. Speak! oh, speak at once! Is it Miss Farinelli?” asked Lady Edith, in a tone of piercing anguish; “in mercy, tell me the worst.”

“I heard no more, Madam! All was hurry and terror at the Castle. My orders were sent to the stable peremptory. I was off in two seconds! They said that the lady would be dead before morning.”

Lady Edith, with trembling hands, threw on

what seemed necessary for her drive, and before she had time to think another thought, was already in the carriage at full speed to Eaglescairn, without a momentary doubt that it was her own beloved Beatrice to whom she now hastened with the speed of thought, and respecting whose recovery from some sudden illness, the doctor seemed by the groom's account absolutely to despair.

When she arrived at the door Lady Edith was hurried by a cluster of agitated servants from the carriage up-stairs to a bed-room. There the shutters were closed, the room darkened, the curtains drawn, and a crowd of silent attendants stood around, many with handkerchiefs at their faces evidently in tears, others with a look of solemn awe, but all too much overwhelmed to speak. Lady Edith glanced nervously around, hurried forward to the bed, drew aside the curtain, looked at the dying countenance within, and giving a sigh of infinite relief fell forward, almost fainting, on the bed.

"Hark ! to the hurried question of despair,
'Where is my child ?'—an echo answers 'Where?'"

Byron.

CHAPTER V.

"Cross that threshold, and you are in a strange country—a country which laughs at all your laws. What, then, are *their* laws? That is not known. What we do certainly know,—what is not attempted to be disguised—is this; that the barbarous discipline of the middle ages still reigns, and is still practised there. But how are these chastisements administered? Who regulates the number of blows? What must be the nature of the passionate and capricious dominion of woman over woman, when she is displeased with her! An ugly woman ruling over a lovely one—an old one over a young. One dare not think of it!"—MICHELET, *Du Prêtre*, p. 287.

HALF in jest, and more than half in earnest, Lady Anne would take no denial, and at last succeeded in carrying Beatrice, a very much astonished recruit and in a ferment of vexation, to the convent of St. Ignatia, though the unwilling captive continued earnestly protesting against having been brought on this unexpected excursion at all, and her heart certainly did sink within her when Beatrice saw the iron gate of the convent close with a loud and sullen clang that reverberated through the long aisles and vaulted cloisters, when the rusty iron chain was pulled, which swung beside the door.

"Well!" said Lady Anne, laughing triumphantly at her own felicitous experiment, "since you have at last yielded, must I now beg your pardon?"

"You should do nothing from morning till night but beg my pardon," replied Beatrice good-humouredly, smiling; "I feel as if rushing up to a forlorn hope. Every minute will be a misery to me that I remain among those never-to-be-sufficiently-avoided female Jesuits, who are sworn to a system of mutual betrayal,—who are bound to repress every affectionate impulse, every generous attachment, and to lead a poor mechanical existence far beneath the dignity of human nature. Each of them is a mere spiritual clock, wound up by the priest, and made to go or to stop as he pleases, and even to go wrong if such be his will. You may laugh, Lady Anne,—anybody can laugh; but I cannot respect one who is so circumstanced, or willingly associate with her."

"The horse that goes round blindfold grinds the corn best," said Lady Anne, oracularly; "you and I should neither think nor act nor read for ourselves when we can have a living master like Father Eustace to tell us better than any book what we should do. Now be so kind as not to kill me with that look."

The hollow crash of the convent-bell at this moment attracted the attention of Beatrice, who glanced round a building—the solemn dulness of which actually made her yawn. The high wall which surrounded it had a mysterious, sombre, distrustful

aspect, the heavy sullen-looking gates seemed as if borrowed from a gaol, the grate of punched iron, was like that of a larder for meat, and the small riveted iron lattices, from which nothing could be seen, were like those of a sepulchre. "It would be a sad, even if it were a respectable death, to be shut in there for life!" exclaimed Beatrice musingly, while she heard the creaking and sliding of a huge bolt; "you have brought me here, Lady Anne, therefore you must let me say what I think, that you could more easily persuade me I am paralytic, and cannot use my limbs, than that my intellects should be bandaged up as useless and never exercised."

The attendant now drew aside a heavy curtain of dark cloth, and the ladies were ushered into a hall lined with oak, and paved with stone, containing no furniture except a black marble table, bearing a large gilt crucifix.

The reception-room into which Lady Anne and Beatrice were next ushered had, like the rest, a double grating, and exhibited an air of stiff propriety, or as Lady Anne whispered, an old-maidish appearance, like the company-room at a finishing London boarding-school, and tables were set out all round for the work of the nuns, which was displayed, with the prices ticketed as at a fancy fair, to be sold for the benefit of the institution. The door soon after their arrival opened to admit a numerous procession of the sisterhood, come to welcome Lady Anne, while they all assumed what is part of the full-dress

worn by nuns for such occasions, an artificial vivacity, most fatiguing to behold.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzio wished her nuns to be "as uncultivated as the wild deer," and those in this convent seemed very much on her model, for the object of popery is to wither up all female intellect. As they all clustered eagerly round Lady Anne, Beatrice thought she had never seen so many pallid cheeks, vacant countenances, lacklustre eyes, and attenuated figures. The senior nun, "sister Martha," seemed to be smiler-general for all the others, as she generally led on the little pantomime of pretended cheerfulness, with a smile stereotyped on her lips, and the rest, who followed her lead, filled up the picture to perfection, thus assuming the full-dress uniform for inspection days. The Mother Superior, who had been occupied in opening letters addressed to the nuns and boarders, and in intercepting several which were not to go, now entered last, and as she paid her stately compliments to Lady Anne, Beatrice, with a start of astonishment, recognised in the Abbess of St. Ignatia the every-where-present Mrs. Lorraine.

With her hands buried under the folds of her long serge dress, and distinguished from the nuns only by a heavy gold cross, the Lady Abbess made a deep curtsy to Beatrice, her eyes so fastened to the ground that she quite lost the advantage of seeing a start of utter amazement, with which her young guest contemplated this new metamorphosis. Once in her life Beatrice had seen a pantomime performed at Inverness, and when Grimaldi, acting

the Indian juggler, swallowed a sword, so that the point came out behind, she felt some degree of astonishment, but that was nothing to the amazement with which the unexpected appearance of Mrs. Lorraine in this new character had filled her almost incredulous mind. For a moment their mutual gaze was steadfast and earnest. At length in a calm measured voice, without any change of colour or of a single feature, Mrs. Lorraine said,—“You are welcome at last, my daughter, into a house where your presence has long been desired. Here all sin or frivolity are shut out, and you have nothing but quiet for mind and body. Not even a temptation can assail the peaceful unity of my children and their pious exercises.”

“Mrs. Lorraine, we have known each other long,” said Beatrice, with a calm intelligent smile, “and you know that I would think religion mere child’s play if all its awful difficulties and deep responsibilities could be overcome by merely building ourselves round with a stone wall. It is the battle within ourselves, not the battle around us, that causes the fatal difficulty in attaining peace, and I shall remain but a very few hours in your Agape-mone here, where I have been brought contrary to my own wishes.”

With a look of benevolent pity at Beatrice, and heaving a sigh which might have driven a ship from its moorings, and went into a second and third edition immediately, the Abbess turned away with Lady Anne, leaving Beatrice to follow them into the recreation-room and garden with sister

Martha, one of the most trusted nuns in the establishment; but in the confusion of meeting Beatrice, Mrs. Lorraine had forgotten, apparently, to warn sister Martha that their young visitor was a heretic, not to be trusted with the secrets of the prison-house.

Sister Martha was evidently a person of the narrowest intellect, and of very uncultivated faculties, who had read little and thought less; but she nevertheless overflowed with abundance of on-for-ever small talk, and seemed glad that it now found an outlet with one whom she evidently mistook for a convert. When Beatrice, after the Abbess was at a distance, heard the outburst of flimsy nonsense which proceeded from sister Martha, she could scarcely wonder, taking this as indeed a fair specimen of the nun species, that there was only a majority of one, in the council of Cardinals which voted that women have souls.

Sister Martha in her determined endeavour to appear happy burst out several times into fits of unaccountable laughter, and talked on without ceasing about the apparitions that had been seen in the convent, the miracles performed there, and the meritorious penances undergone by the sisterhood. "I had to chew a piece of window-glass into a fine powder yesterday," she whispered confidentially, "in expiation for having rinsed my teeth with water before going to Communion, as nothing must enter the mouth previously."

"Yet does not St. Paul find fault with the Corinthians for coming hungry to the Holy Sacrament,

and says,—‘Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?’” replied Beatrice; “surely there could be no harm in brushing your own teeth.”

“Nothing is mine. We never say my, or mine, of anything. All is in common,—all is ours, nothing mine.”

Beatrice could not but smile at this idea, that even the teeth in her head were not sister Martha’s own property, but she began to think it was pretty near the truth as to the use she might make of them, when told that the poor nun had on the previous day been allowed no dinner, as a penance for talking without leave, except the apple parings from the Superior’s own dessert, which she had to receive thankfully on her knees. Sister Martha pointed out that over the door of each cell stood an inscription containing but one word, to express the character of each nun who selected it for her motto. Over that intended for Miss Turton, was “*Mortificazione!*”

“I know no more of Latin than your parrot, if you have one,” continued sister Martha, confidentially, “but I can translate the motto over mine, ‘*Charitas.*’”

The last notes of a chant were dying away in the distance, when the chapel gates were thrown open, and a procession of girls passed out close to Beatrice. These young novices had each her hands crossed over her breast and concealed in large white cuffs, and her eyes fastened on the ground, while they all walked with a slow tragedy-step, and whimpered out litanies in Latin, bowing as

they passed before a little chapel, or baby-house of glass, containing a waxen image of their patron saint. The smallest irregularity in this childish ceremony was punished as a serious crime, therefore it was with an air of most anxious circumspection that one of the poor disastrous-looking girls carried an image of St. Bridget—a very hideous one, as if it had been her own favourite doll, and the other little girls followed with a perfect pantheon of idols, rosaries, blessed beads, medals, and relics.

“There!” whispered sister Martha in a tone of confidential secrecy, for she had a ten-gossip power, “those are the girls educated here to act elsewhere as Protestant governesses. Our novices receive first-rate tuition with board and lodging for 30*l.*, therefore they can afford to take situations at such a perfect nothing of a salary, that managing mammas are enchanted to get music and languages taught at half-price, without venturing to make very strict inquiries into creeds and doctrines. People are all so fond of jobbing, that in a year or two, these Protestant ladies give their *protégées* a most flourishing recommendation, and by this means they are started in life without a suspicion or a trace of our teaching discoverable.”

“How perfectly honest!” muttered Beatrice to herself, “and how perfectly jesuitical.”

“Our pupils have a dispensation to attend any church, and to profess any creed that may be preferred in the families where they serve,” continued sister Martha, delighted to hear the sound of her own voice, as she had been under a dispensation

of unbroken silence for a fortnight. "I know one of our two cleverest novices is in a Free Church family now. She is not suspected to have ever entered any Established Church, and one of our favourite pupils pretends to be a great admirer of Dr. Cavendish's sermons. The last we sent out is most confidently trusted in the family of a rich Quaker."

"But," exclaimed Beatrice, burning with indignation, "have they no scruples?"

"Of course not! They are educated on purpose, and they make the sacrifice of enduring such people for the sake of our Church. Father Eustace gives them absolution secretly once a month, when they tell him all that is said in these houses and report progress among their pupils. The plan works most successfully in gaining a supernatural influence over the rising generation, and very soon not a domestic hearth in Britain will be free from our influence."

"Indeed;" said Beatrice, who might as well have made no reply, as sister Martha had evidently not the faculty of listening to anything. "We Protestants walk in blindfold security, because, judging from ourselves, we cannot believe in underhand treachery. The safety of such conduct arises from its being so incredible that an honest nature cannot believe in it, but when the house is on fire it does not suffice to shut the door, and say it is a false alarm."

"It is grand," said sister Martha, pursuing the train of her own thoughts, "to be one in so

great a scheme. We have everything to gain by proselyting, and nothing to lose. Sir Allan McAlpine's conversion will be 10,000*l.* a-year to our community, and Lady Anne's above 80,000*l.* That is very encouraging! Besides those pupils in the governess department, there are above two hundred of our scholars out in every imaginable capacity, who do our work well, and are warranted as 'perfect treasures.' Several are in booksellers' shops recommending our own publications as the best antidotes to Romanism; but the system of family espionage answers best, therefore we go out as Protestant sick-nurses and nursery-maids. Several act the part of being converts to Protestantism, and those ladies who fancy they have been the means of converting another, are so flattered at their own success, that they often afterwards become an easy prey to our emissaries."

In one room Beatrice was shown the novices, many among them girls of high and even noble birth, recently perverted, and wasting their time in the most menial offices,—brushing shoes, scouring floors, washing plates, darning stockings, and cleaning the hair of their companions, in which a considerable breed of live stock was generally allowed to propagate undisturbed, as well as to colonize in the dresses of the nuns, which might have afforded at any time a good field for the study of entomology. "In the English Church," thought Beatrice, "young people who become deliriously excited on religion are advised to sit down and read their Bibles, to pray in their closets, and to

obey their parents ; but such sedative prescriptions do not suit the high-fever pitch of any one like these girls bordering on lunacy. The Romish Church, however, adapts itself to human nature in any shape, and recommends every young man in a raving state exactly the sort of self-willed submission he wants, to abjure every sober, staid and rational habit of life, to take his shoes off his feet, to shave his crown, to put a rope round his waist, to give up every shilling of his income, and to preach through the streets as a begging friar.* There he is then for life, as mad and happy as any lunatic in any asylum. Thus the priests acquire lands, jewels, houses, books, pictures, gold and silver, all or any of which are welcome contributions, to be gained honestly if possible, but by any means whatever to be gained. The heathen philosopher, Zoroaster, forbade men to do what was even doubtfully right ; but here, what is obviously wrong may and must be done to increase the funds of the Popish Church, if the priest who is to gain all the advantage commands a crime."

Lady Anne having now joined Beatrice, without the Lady Abbess, whispered that they must positively make sister Martha lead them into the chapel, where one of the nuns was about to be anathematized for eating food when she was ordered to fast, having been detected in the act of devouring raw vegetables, like any hungry animal, in the garden. "I can almost sympathise with the poor thing," added Lady Anne. "Formerly food was

* Macaulay.

to me like the air I breathe, that never occupied my thoughts except during the minute I ate it; but now, you can have no idea of the gnawing agony I feel at times, and how often Father Eustace has to make me do penance for having felt a craving to eat buttered-toast or even a bit of dry bread."

"Do you remember," said Beatrice, "the agonies of mind endured by that poor young Oxonian, Froude, who killed himself with useless austerities for imaginary guilt? One sin was that he had wished to eat a morsel of cold goose. How much better to have satisfied his appetite and thought no more about it! He wasted a whole day with grief and self-reproach for having eaten some 'cold endings,' and I had the greatest difficulty in ascertaining what that dish really is."

On the floor of the chapel a black cloth had been carefully spread, adorned in the centre with a white cross, and the smell of medicated incense was almost intoxicating. When Lady Anne stole in, followed by Beatrice, the candles on the altar were at that very moment extinguished by Father Eustace, who was pronouncing in a sepulchral tone before a glittering crucifix, as if his tongue were almost frozen with horror, a long, gloomy, and most awful anathema on the trembling culprit, a young nun of most emaciated aspect, after which he raised on high for a moment the lighted torch he held in his hand, which he dashed on the ground so that the flame became extinguished. It was a scene most exciting to the senses, the passions, and the imaginations of unaccustomed persons,

but the nuns began immediately counting their beads, and looking carelessly round them.

Lady Anne and sister Martha, with a thrill of horror, left the chapel, passing on the way out several chests which stood open to receive gifts. They were followed by Beatrice, who felt as if she had witnessed some secret Hindoo rite; and when they were walking hurriedly at the end of a long narrow corridor which presented a most chilling, forlorn, and desolate aspect, Lady Anne stopped to inquire where it led to.

"Nowhere," answered sister Martha, evidently as anxious as a London policeman to make them "move on." "That passage is quite disused, except for invalids, when we have any."

The speaker looked somewhat confused, and was impatiently hurrying them onwards, when Lady Anne, in her own pretty wilful way, threw her arm round the waist of Beatrice, seized her hand, and exclaimed with laughing vivacity, "The very place for a polka!" Gaily defying sister Martha to stop her, she sung a lively air, and danced off with Beatrice to the farthest end of the corridor, where leaning on a closed door, laughing, chatting, and breathless, she looked the very picture of beautiful girlish frolic and heedless good-humour. Scarcely, however, had she finished a jesting remark to Beatrice on the evident alarm of sister Martha at this unexpected escapade, before her smiles were suddenly banished by the sound of a low deep groan which evidently proceeded from that room on the door of which they were leaning. It was

again repeated in a tone of greater anguish than before, and a low anxious voice was heard to say, in a tone of trembling apprehension : “ Do I once more hear the voice of strangers? oh, help a wretched prisoner! All my friends believe me dead! All around are my enemies! My very name is changed! I am utterly lost and forgotten! Be generous and help a helpless being! Long years have passed away, and still I am here. Give information, I am utterly and hopelessly crushed. Oh, let me be released!”

Lady Anne stood petrified with horror, while Beatrice, though trembling and aghast, hurriedly endeavoured to open the door, which was both locked and barred. Sister Martha now flew like lightning to seize Beatrice by the hand, saying, in a tone of suppressed agitation, “ Come away—come away instantly! She is a dangerous lunatic. I shall tell you all elsewhere, but that poor maniac grows frantically excited often. We are all in terror for her! She screams sometimes like a witch in a storm! Come away, or she may burst out and do us a mischief!”

“ Sister Martha, you lie in saying so; but they will believe you,” said the prisoner, in a tone of heart-broken despondency. “ Speak one kind word to me, strangers, before you go! Even if I am mad, say you pity me. I have forgotten the voice of sympathy, and would be comforted by hearing it once again. Death alone can release me, unless you do. I have much to tell—secrets that ought not to die with me!”

"She will certainly break loose—she has done so often!" exclaimed sister Martha, affecting the terror which Beatrice, who fixed on her a steady penetrating gaze, perceived she did not really feel. "Sister Rachel ought to be in a strait waistcoat. You should hear her battering frantically against that door, as she will do, with all the strength of desperation! If you remain here, her hideous language, her wild discordant shrieks, and her threats of vengeance, would make you thankful, indeed, to me for taking you away. Come, instantly!"

Lady Anne, pale with agitation, and shaking in every limb, allowed sister Martha to lead her away, and Beatrice having managed for a single minute to elude the vigilant eye of her cicerone, contrived hurriedly to push under the door a card, on which she had written clandestinely with her pencil some words of promise, of sympathy, and of consolation. Beatrice heard a deep sob through the door as she left it in pursuit of her companions, and then all was quiet as death, while her little manœuvre had been so instantaneously completed that no one could guess she had held any communication with the prisoner, as the watchful eye of sister Martha was chiefly engrossed by Lady Anne's more active movements.

"It is much better for our poor maniac, and for every one else, that this unfortunate sister Rachel should be tenderly watched," observed sister Martha, assuming a tone of composed gentleness, and of most contemptuous pity; "we thus prevent

her doing mischief to herself and others, in body and soul."

"Yet surely the most wretched maniac might have friends of former and better days who should gain access to her!" said Beatrice hastily; but seeing sister Martha look disconcerted and angry, she at once resolved to hide the deep interest she felt in this solitary captive until circumstances enabled her to make some effort for her relief. She appeared, therefore, absorbed in contemplating the red centre of a moss-rose in her hand, and took no part in a dissertation which followed between sister Martha and Lady Anne, on the subject of lunacy and its treatment, believing in her own mind that this was a case of causing insanity, rather than of curing it. The fervent appeal of that prisoner for help still rung in her ears, and should not be in vain; but what help could reach any one within the iron bars of a convent? If the unfortunate captive had friends, they now believed her dead; or if she had been kidnapped into this den unknown to them, those who did miss her might vainly have advertised in every newspaper throughout Scotland, every day of every week for a year, but no inmate of that prison-house would have betrayed the secret of where she was incarcerated. Beatrice thought with secret emotions of sympathy how that weary captive must have devoured her tears alone for years in unknown imprisonment; and as these thoughts crowded into her mind, the whole firmness and benevolence of her nature seemed at once roused into action.

Meanwhile, though making a flurried endeavour to look quite unconcerned, her earnest resolution was that no stone should be unturned to release, with Lady Edith's advice and assistance, the object of her profound interest and anxious sympathy.

"For hers had been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd and barr'd—forbidden fare."

"Pray mention nothing of what you have seen," whispered sister Martha, very earnestly. "You know in our order we all assume characteristic names. Mine is 'the Mother of Charity,' and our lady abbess calls herself 'the Mother of Mercy,' but she caused me to be frightfully scourged the last time that a secret was discovered through my inadvertence. I am in general cautious to excess of speaking to any one about anything; very silent, as you see, and circumspect; but how it happened I cannot tell, some secret by some means transpired, and I was blamed. They dragged me out of bed last week, and the Mother of Mercy herself pulled me along that floor, by the hair, into a dungeon, kicked me several times, and left me there fainting. For two days I got no food; my hair was tied to nails fastened in the wall, so that I could not sleep for the pain, and I remained in cold and darkness, with bruises on my chest as large as the palm of my hand, and only my night-dress on for a week. How anything like a secret could come out through me, I never can guess, for no one is so cautious and silent as myself—careful even to a fault. I do certainly tire of silence sometimes,

when shut' up for twenty days alone, with my face to a whitewashed wall. It may be wrong to say so, but I do weary, and almost envy the criminals in jail, for they can talk once a day to the turnkey. We are particularly forbid to have any friendships or preferences among ourselves, but quarrels are always winked at, and I think sister Dorcas invented the whole story to spite me for having let out a secret of hers. It was the greatest mistake to suspect me, as I never speak to anybody when I can help it. Never! But I desire to be like brother Juniper, of the order of St. Francis, who welcomed all insults and injuries as he would the most costly gems."

"Milton was right," thought Beatrice—

"Neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone."

CHAPTER VI.

"The face was young still, but its happy look
Was gone; the cheek had lost its colour, and
The lip its smile; the light that once had play'd
Like sunshine in those eyes was quench'd and dim,
For tears had wasted it." L. E. L.

THE next morning dawned upon that day on which Miss Turton, after a lifetime of frivolous selfishness, was to receive the last consolation to her vanity, in publicly retiring, like some eminent actress, from public life, amidst torrents of applause; and the ceremony of her installation as a nun among the pale sisterhood of St. Ignatia was to take place with extraordinary splendour. Dressed as a bride, she appeared in a rich brocaded white silk, trimmed round the skirt with festoons of Honiton lace, looped up with bunches of white jessamine and lily of the valley. Head-dress, a wreath of orange flowers and diamonds; these jewels being the property of the convent, and lent out, like a theatrical wardrobe, for such occasions. The magnificent dress, worn only on this occasion, was to be confiscated, immediately after the ceremony, for the benefit of the institution, and all the beautiful presents made to Miss Turton by her various friends were to follow.

"Well," said sister Martha to Beatrice, "do you not, at this moment, envy our new sister?"

"But all her moments are not to be like this moment of feverish excitement," replied Beatrice. "There are years to follow; during which I should prefer being my own property, and to have my own belongings."

"Yes;" whispered Lady Anne, unable entirely to suppress a laugh. "Poor Miss Turton cannot keep so much as her silver thimble, which is to be exchanged for one of iron. Even the miniature portrait of that imaginary captain in the navy, her first admirer, supposed to have been drowned in undiscovered seas, is forfeited! Poor dear Miss Turton! all her comfortable little affections must now be laid aside. She had worked up her enthusiasm to an extremity of self-sacrifice, and told me yesterday, on an experience, you know, of only twenty-four hours, that she never knew happiness before; but what will she say in twenty-four years? She meant, in a general way, to lead a St. Ignatian life of humility and mortification; but fancy her horror on coming to particulars, and only then discovering that all the nuns wash together in the same basin, and dry themselves with a public towel. My worthy governess (may she never live to repent this step!) was prepared to undergo the sort of poetical crust of bread that we young ladies all feel ready to live upon, either with the lover we prefer to marry or in a convent like this; but only conceive the consternation of poor fastidious Miss Turton, when told that the nuns, on alternate days,

wear each other's dresses. Thus, what old sister Martha, a mere mass of disease, wears to-day, Miss Turton must equip herself in to-morrow."

"She, who used to wear a fresh muslin dress every morning!" said Beatrice; "and there is half a foot of difference in their height!"

"Fancy Miss Turton, who was so particular about her hair, being obliged to use the universal comb, too!" added Lady Anne, in a tone of irrepressible laughter, while she gracefully tossed back her own clustering ringlets; "and she dare not wash her feet without express permission from the Lady Abbess. Do you see that image of St. Bridget on the black marble altar, veiled, crowned and splendidly adorned with variously coloured jewels? Well, Miss Turton was allowed to kiss its feet this morning, and to dress it. She was as happy on the occasion as any little school-girl with her doll during the holidays. I gave her, some time ago, my last court dress, which you see she has put upon St. Bridget, and those velvet flowers were what I wore once at a fancy ball"——

At this moment the great convent-bell tolled, when every Papist present instantly dropped on his knees, rapidly muttering Latin prayers to the patron saint of the institution. Miss Turton, looking much flushed and prodigiously excited, made herself very conspicuous by her pantomime of devotion before this concourse of spectators, and having practised over the whole scene of her profession in various rehearsals before a mirror, she afterwards went through the whole ceremony with

a theatrical grace worthy of Grisi or Jenny Lind. After taking the vows, and going through a rapid preliminary of most marvellous ceremonies, with Mrs. Lorraine acting as god-mother, Miss Turton, according to etiquette, knelt humbly before the bishop, a very fine looking old man, begging an admission to reside in the Convent of St. Ignatia, whence she never more desired to have egress, till she left it for the grave. She was next led by sister Martha and three other nuns to inspect her own coffin, on which her new conventual name was engraved, "sister Agnes."

Miss Turton then assisted to carry her own coffin forward to the chapel, while Bishop Cameron distinctly enumerated all the pleasures she was called on to relinquish; and she listened in an attitude that should have been modelled in marble for a tombstone. When this was concluded, sister Agnes, in reply, loudly but lugubriously repeated, in a perfect excitement of affectation, "I resign them—I resign them all."

Sister Martha performed the part of bridesmaid at this melancholy bridal, and assisted sister Agnes, who now assumed the conventual dress of black serge, and suffered the loss of her few remaining ringlets. Miss Turton then threw her white satin dress on the stone steps of the altar, and theatrically stamped upon it, trampling the lace and flowers contemptuously under her feet, to represent her abhorrence of every earthly vanity; and she then laid herself gracefully down in the coffin, which was immediately covered with a black pall. The

nuns then, each holding a large wax taper, chanted the funeral service over her in a low monotonous dirge. They strewed her over with flowers, and sung hymns in Latin over Miss Turton, deceased.

It was to be her last public exhibition, therefore Miss Turton seemed resolved to make the most of it. This dismal ceremony was closed by the Lady Abbess, *ci-devant* Mrs. Lorraine, when Miss Turton emerged from the living tomb, endowing her newly risen daughter "sister Agnes" with a crucifix and a rosary. She was next embraced by each of the sisterhood, who placed a silver crown on her head. Then Bishop Cameron gave her his benediction, and at length took leave of the new nun, saying, "Fortunate and happy daughter! may your years, days, and months roll on here unheeded, as the summer stream glides smoothly past a child, sporting innocently on its banks!"

"As soon as a nun takes the veil she chooses her confessor," whispered sister Martha, in a gossiping tone, to Beatrice. "There are desperate quarrels amongst us; for we have nothing else to think of but the little offences that are given and taken. We all have portraits in our cells of either Father Eustace or Father Ambrose, and we are divided into two contending parties,—the Eustacians and the Ambrosians."

"A very important schism amongst you!" observed Beatrice. "You seem in all respects like the Vestal virgins of a heathen temple. And to which of the two opposing sects do you belong?"

"I am one of those who think Father Eustace's

penances too rigid; but in that I may be quite wrong. The poor girl who accompanied sister Agnes here last week seems already more than half dead. She is obliged by our confessor to stand all night in the open air in order to overcome sleep, and I heard him telling her about St. Peter of Alcantara, who during forty years slept but one hour and a half each night. She will obstinately persist in denying* that the new robe given last week to Father Eustace was her making, though ordered to say it was. The fact is, she never saw it in her life; but obedience is the first of duties, therefore as a punishment she has the penance of prostration for a whole day, and must sit all next week with her face to a damp white-washed wall, speaking to nobody."

"Poor, misguided Bessie! will nothing open her eyes?" exclaimed Beatrice; "so lately with the bloom of happy girlhood on her lovely cheek!"

"She will evidently not live many weeks, and is said to be nearly blind already. She has certainly lost one eye, and Father Eustace makes her stand for hours with her hands bound between her shoulders, and her face bowed down; or she lies on ashes, with her head between her knees. Sometimes, too, she beats the ground with her forehead, and her cheeks are already furrowed by continual streams of tears. Poor thing! It is lucky for nuns that they do not live always, and very few of Father Eustace's votaries last more than five or ten years."

* *The Times*, 7th August, 1852.

"He is a most mysterious tyrant, and an uncomfortable person to converse with," said Beatrice; "his unfortunate eyes are always thrown on the ground, or under the table, or anywhere but at the person he speaks to."

"Of course," replied sister Martha, in a low confiding voice; "he practises the sanctification of the eyes, like St. Bernard, who, after being a novice during an entire year, never knew that his own cell was vaulted, nor did he ever observe that there were but three windows in the church of the monastery where he spent his noviciate. St. Lewis of Gonzaga never was known to look in the face of his own mother."

"How very stupid and unfeeling!" exclaimed Beatrice, indignantly. "But what pride is so great as spiritual pride!"

"Perhaps you are not far wrong," answered Lady Anne, in a tone of more than common reflection. "Certainly, sister Agnes expects to acquire such a preeminence in holiness that hereafter her name shall only be spoken on bended knees. After all, perhaps I shall act better without her influence. She certainly had a spite at poor dear mamma, and made her life utterly miserable of late. I begin now to like your notions of religion better than Miss Turton's. Any she had depend chiefly on music, poetry, taste, and impulse."

"Yes; and how often among beautiful flowers like these an adder is concealed!" continued Beatrice. "I could almost thank you, Lady Anne, for this glimpse into convent life, which I should never

willingly have ventured to take. Seeing is indeed believing! Nothing short of such a visit could have fully revealed to me the evils and dangers, the absurdities and follies of Popery. I certainly felt a sort of gloomy curiosity to know the worst; but all my anticipations have been exceeded by witnessing here the wild dreams of enthusiastic devotion, the terrors of superstition, and the petty despotism of a little secluded world, where all is misery or degradation, despair or death. Father Eustace would persuade us (but I trust he will not succeed with you) that religion is his accomplice, in recommending you a life of solitary idleness, of voluntary austerities, of moral suicide, which would hurry you into an early grave, or make you such an idiot as poor sister Martha and her companions, who lose the faculty of knowing right from wrong, as they are never allowed to judge and act either way for themselves, and are often driven to deeds of immorality which would amaze any honest mind with that Protestant superfluity, a conscience."

"I shall not venture rashly on choosing either the bridal or the conventual veil," said Lady Anne, with a relapse into her former heedless vivacity. "The very sameness and wearisomeness of a life here would, as you say, or seem to say, biologize my mind into idiotcy."

"Yes, Lady Anne. May a brighter destiny await you than the solitude and gloom of a cloister!" said Beatrice warmly. "With your brilliant spirits, bright talents, and energetic mind,

let not the spring-time of your felicity be blighted by the creeping palsy of superstition ; but dare to be happy, and avoid the phantoms which Popery substitutes for reality. You and my old companion, Allan, are made for happiness, and why not enjoy it together ? ”

Lady Anne coloured and looked down ; but a smile dimpled round her mouth, and she was if possible more cordially confidential to Beatrice that evening than she had ever dared to be under the blighting influence of Miss Turton and Father Eustace. “ By nature,” she said, “ my governess found me very ready for her Popish teaching. Everything that I had to learn, I wished, like any young Jesuit, to be told, and to see every difficulty removed by my teacher from my path. Miss Turton forbid me, under desperate penalties, to think of anything that she did not explain, and I was only too happy indolently to acquiesce in whatever she chose to say, repeating her opinions like a parrot, rather than have the trouble of forming my own. It is so easy, you know, to gaze at an image, to count a score of beads, to be present when a distant priest mutters unintelligible litanies, and to repeat the same form endlessly over and over again myself. My poor little cramped and stunted mind seemed to me quite a giant of perfection, till I measured it beside yours ; but now I can compare my own mutilated intellect to nothing but the Torso in Lord Elgin’s marbles, with neither head, eyes, arms, nor legs, to act, or think, or see with. No faculty is cultivated in the Church of Rome but memory. We learn a creed

by rote, not to be understood, but merely to be recapitulated."

It was not long before Lady Anne saw a specimen of those rather uncommon views of duty entertained by the Jesuit sisterhood. She was on the point of retiring to bed in her little solitary cell, and felt her position an interesting rehearsal of convent life, when, to her surprise, Mrs. Lorraine, Lady Abbess of St. Ignatia, entered with cautious step, as if afraid of being overheard, and told her that the community felt most grateful for her present visit, and the more so, as she had brought Miss Farinelli, whom it was of the greatest consequence that they should detain, whether willingly or not, within their walls for a fortnight. "Indeed so urgent is the case, that, truth to say, I have no choice, nor can I give you any. Stay she must."

"Impossible! quite impossible! I had difficulty enough in bringing her here for one night," exclaimed Lady Anne, almost breathless with consternation. "My honour is pledged that she shall be with Lady Edith to-morrow. You make me feel quite all-over-ish with fright."

"No matter! You act under my authority, therefore the responsibility is mine. The order to detain Miss Farinelli comes from our bishop, who cannot do wrong. I have let Lady Edith know that she need not expect her *protégée* for some time. She believes that Miss Farinelli has set out suddenly for Spain in search of her unknown relatives, and indeed, if she prove refractory, that must be her ultimate destination."

“ But,” said Lady Anne in an under tone of immeasurable alarm, “ I never meant to betray Miss Farinelli. I cannot and will not do it. I could die first. Lady Edith shall fetch a warrant to search this house from the roof to the cellar.”

“ That cannot be. Lady Edith has no legal right over Miss Farinelli, who comes here to-day, or goes abroad to-morrow, without any one having a right in law to hinder her. The fact is, my daughter, you will greatly impede the advantage of our Church if you do not consent to keep it secret, for a fortnight, where Miss Farinelli is. No one saw her depart in your carriage but those who were in the plot; but now that our bird is caged, do you think there is the thing on earth that could influence me to betray the secret of Miss Farinelli being here, when her remaining is so important to the Church? Thousands a-year depend upon this little manœuvre, and it shall positively be completed. Father Eustace must lay his injunction upon you to obey, and you know the greatest of all virtues is obedience. No matter whether you think an order right or wrong, you must not judge, but obey. The more your confessor’s command is opposed to your private judgment, revolting to your personal feelings, or wounding to your individual conscience, the greater your merit in being a mere machine. If nature says it is sin, and if the law of God says it is sin, but if Father Eustace says it must be done, then it must and shall. The responsibility is his, not yours.”

“ But you cannot mean it!” exclaimed Lady

Anne almost hysterically. "You would frighten me out of my wits if I had any wits to be frightened out of."

Mrs. Lorraine turned away with so determined an air, that Lady Anne felt intimidated from any further remonstrance, but not the less determined rather to part with her head than to leave the convent without Beatrice, and never to take the pledge, as Mrs. Lorraine evidently intended she should, to mislead Lady Edith respecting the place to which Beatrice had been, through her own jesting inadvertency, decoyed. That any information had been sent by the abbess to Lady Edith she did not now believe. At this moment Lady Anne, in her hot indignation at having been cajoled into becoming the heedless instrument of so deep a plot, felt as if the scales were falling from her eyes,—as if her chain had snapped into fragments, and the iron bondage of Romanism were at an end. She saw the iniquity of that system which acknowledges no rule of truth or honour. The power of natural conscience, which for ever survives amidst the ruins of our fallen nature, once more asserted itself, the remembrances of Protestant principle appeared in all their brightness to her memory, and clasping her hands over her eyes, as one awaking from a dream, she mentally exclaimed, "My mother's prayers have been heard. Yes, I am preserved from the snare. I feel awake and in my right mind. Truly a man who teaches lying and treachery, like Father Eustace, may turn his eyes towards heaven, but his steps are towards hell

itself. I shall not advance with him another pace, or obey him for another hour, if such be the use he would make of his soul-enthraling authority. In promising implicit obedience to a superior, one would need to ascertain what that superior, when he has riveted his fetters on the soul, will then enjoin; or it may be an outrage on every law human and divine. What can I do to secure soonest the release of my dearest Beatrice, or even to be quite sure of my own escape? Dear mamma, how she warned me against all this double-dealing and deceit! but every one must buy her own experience in life, and dearly some of us pay for it. I know she will be quite in a way about my coming here. Not that she ever is, or ever was really angry—perhaps it would be better for me had she been less indulgent; and oh, how often Father Eustace has said that the nearer the tie to a heretic, the more dangerous her influence, and the greater my merit in steeling my heart against every such old association. My own mother! Your child is restored to you—and how happy we shall now be together! How I long to tell you all, and to ask your forgiveness of the past!”

“What a fearful superstition, which subsists on deception, and on the rupture of every domestic attachment!” exclaimed Beatrice shuddering, when Lady Anne had with grief and loathing confessed all her penitence and perplexity. “Yet I never look now at the most virtuous and talented of human beings without thinking, ‘there is in you the germ of that corruption which might, under

Popish enticements, be led gradually onwards to all the horrors of Jesuitism.' It begins with an apparently innocent love of processions, flowers, music, perfumes, painted glass windows, stone altars, wax candles, and fairy tales; these all stand at the porch to entice the curiosity of heedless wanderers; but the 'Chamber of Horrors' is concealed within. If I am indeed to be detained a prisoner within these walls, my prayers shall be for protection against myself as much as against any other danger; for as Lot's wife was lost by forbidden curiosity, so do many now fall into the lowest depths of Romanism by being led on to contemplate these corruptions, which have an answering chord in the fallen nature of man "

CHAPTER VII.

“Wanderer, come to me ;

Why didst thou ever leave me ? Know'st thou all
I could have borne, and call'd it joy to bear,
For thy sake ? Know'st thou, that thy voice had power
To shake me with a thrill of happiness,
By one kind tone ? to fill mine eyes with tears
Of yearning love ? And thou ! oh, thou didst throw
That crush'd affection back upon my heart ;
Yet come to me—it died not !”—HEMANS.

WHEN Beatrice retired at night to her cell in the convent of St. Ignatia, she felt her position so strange and new, that it was long before she could compose her mind to sleep. She had, however, at last been wrapped in a profound slumber for an unknown period, when she was suddenly awakened to the consciousness that a light was glimmering within the room. It seemed at first almost like a dream, but the next moment it became a certainty. She sat up, and silently drawing aside her curtain, a vision was before her quite equal in mystery and in beauty to any Popish legend she ever read or heard of.

A figure stood near the door, clad in white draperies, the face muffled up like that of a corpse, and carrying a light which seemed to spread a halo all around. Beatrice almost screamed with appre-

hension, for it slowly and cautiously approached the bed with a gliding inaudible step, and the little that could be seen of the countenance was pallid as death.

Beatrice, with an impulse of girlish terror, tremblingly hid her head under the bed-clothes, while her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and she could almost hear the violent beating of her heart. Here then was a real Popish apparition, she thought; or was it not rather some trick to terrify her into believing in them? Indignant at the idea of being thus perhaps imposed upon, Beatrice determined to face the worst, and at once uncovering her eyes, she sat up erect, made a desperate effort to be courageous, and looking full at the startling apparition, beheld the wan and wasted countenance of Bessie M^cRonald, who silently placed her finger on her lips, and pointed with a warning look towards the door, then advancing, she whispered in so low a tone as to be almost inaudible,—

“ Rise, Miss Farinelli—rise quickly. They are going to detain you here by force,—one hope of escape remains for you, and only one. Dress immediately, while I go to call up Lady Anne. If it cost me my life, you shall be free. I owe more than life to Lady Edith and you. Make haste. We must be quick, or be too late. In half an hour all chance would be over.”

Beatrice, bewildered with astonishment and perplexity, still lost not a moment in hurrying on her dress, and was joined in a few moments by Lady

Anne, in a fever of agitation and excitement at this most unexpected summons. Bessie then explained, in a low strange whisper of unmitigated terror, that from the moment of Beatrice entering at the gates of St. Ignatia, she had perceived there was a scheme in agitation to detain Miss Farinelli there, but that her suspicions had been turned into certainties that day, by her receiving orders from Father Eustace to assist in the plot for transforming his guests into prisoners.

While Lady Anne stood aghast with indignant consternation at this intelligence, Bessie added, that, as Robert Carre was at Inverness on farming business, she had conveyed notice to him of the difficulty they were in, and requested him to bring round Lady Anne's carriage quietly to a place she indicated near the chapel. She then proposed that Beatrice and Lady Anne should join the procession to prayers at the hour of *nocturns*, in dresses which she had brought, similar to those of the nuns, and, favoured by the intense darkness of the night, reach the gates unobserved. Bessie added, that the porteress being ill, she had been appointed to attend upon her, and had already abstracted the keys for the purpose of liberating them.

"You accompany us, of course?" said Beatrice: and seeing Bessie hesitate, she added, "I do not stir a step without you! You have been kept in a state of most unnatural delusion, but now surely the spell is broken. Now surely you will escape with us; now surely you will restore yourself to home and to happiness."

"To happiness! Impossible!—but to home,—oh, how gladly, if they will receive me back, broken in heart and in health as I am, and peniless!"—exclaimed Bessie, making a mournful attempt to choke back the tears that nearly suffocated her. "Will my uncle ever see me again?"

"Bessie, you know perfectly how that kind old uncle will welcome you," replied Beatrice, eagerly. "Is the sun never to shine again if clouds pass across it for a time? Come, we are ready."

The convent bell now sonorously reverberated through the echoing passages; and as the long procession of nuns—many among them fragile girls, torn from their slumbers to endure the chill of a winter's night—darkly issued from the door, three persons added themselves to the number; but no sooner were they safely in the cloisters, than they disappeared behind a pillar, and hurried, under shadow of the long lime avenue, to the gates. With difficulty these were opened by the trembling hands of Bessie, and in a moment, Robert Carre, having hurriedly handed them into the carriage, got up himself behind, and they drove off.

"Away—away—away! We are safe!" exclaimed Bessie, in a tone of the deepest thankfulness. "But you little know, Miss Farinelli, what a danger it has been. All within those walls are bound to betray every secret they can overhear, and we might have been discovered. That poor nun they call a maniac told me much. I heard her cries one day, and stole in the night-time to her cell. For twelve long years she has been their

prisoner. And oh, Miss Farinelli, when you hear who she is,—if I dare tell that secret,—what then will your feelings be?"

"Tell me! Speak!" exclaimed Beatrice, who saw from the tone of Bessie that something very strange was about to be revealed. "Who is that unfortunate prisoner?"

"When you were cast ashore a helpless child at Clanmarina, you had an attendant. She was a trusty Protestant, who had been the devoted companion of your deceased mother, and had promised your father in his dying hour that you should be brought to Clanmarina, and delivered safely to those he had appointed your Protestant guardians."

"Bessie! go on! Who were these?—tell me all instantly! Oh, how strange and bewildering! Who were my parents? Tell me, and I shall bless you."

"The last Lord Eaglescairn had a second son, whom he disowned for having married a Spanish lady. She died five years after your birth. He had been himself in declining health, and did not long survive; but his last act was to place you in the charge of Theresa Da Hosta, your cousin, with all the papers which would prove you entitled to the property here, and to a Spanish estate from your mother."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Beatrice, in breathless astonishment; "it cannot be!"

"Perfectly true," continued Bessie, a wan smile stealing over her lovely face, at the good news she was communicating. "That ship, as it entered the

little harbour of Clanmarina, being wrecked, you were, by a strange coincidence, thrown into the hands of Sir Evan, the very man into whose care Theresa had promised to consign you ; but she herself most unfortunately fell to the charge of Father Eustace, who soon discovered that if your rights became known, his obedient tool, Lord Eaglescairn, might be deprived of that fortune and estate to which he then believed himself entitled, and which Father Eustace himself could now squander at his own pleasure and for his own purposes."

"Go on," said Lady Anne, impatiently. "How the plot thickens ! I never read a more romantic romance !"

"It indeed became so at last," continued Bessie, rapidly. "The papers were all taken from Theresa, and she was offered countless wealth to embark with the Spanish crew for her native country, leaving you, an unknown foundling, behind ; but her strong Protestant conscience judged for itself that this would be wrong. She would listen to no terms but the restoration of her papers, and that you should be brought up by Sir Evan, a Protestant, with all your rights acknowledged. This was evidently not for the interest of the Popish Church, and therefore Theresa Da Hosta has been a martyr in that dungeon for twelve years, branded as a lunatic, and maltreated as if she were a dangerous one. Any day she might have obtained her liberty if she would go to Spain and if she would relinquish your rights, but her conscience told her she had once accepted the sacred trust of a dying

parent, and you see how conscientiously she has endured the slow consuming torture of years to fulfil her duty. The abbess calls Theresa's cell 'Rome,' and if any one ever inquired for her, as Sir Evan once did, they answered that 'She is gone to Rome.'"

Beatrice covered her face with her hands and wept with overwhelming emotion, while Lady Anne eagerly exclaimed, "But tell me, is not the mother of Miss Farinelli now living near the chapel of St. Bridget at Eaglescairn? Lady Edith herself recognised her likeness to the person cast ashore."

"I told Theresa this, and she believes it to be a popish sister of her own, brought over from a convent at Corunna to personate her. The object of Father Eustace in trying to detain you now in this nunnery is, that Lord Eaglescairn feels himself dying. The sight of you has long awakened him to a wretched sense of repentance without reformation. He confesses to Father Eustace every day, who knows his crime already, who instigated it, and who gives him unbounded absolution for it. Father Eustace tells him it matters nothing to have obeyed the Church ninety-nine times if he rebel the hundredth; but still death is a close monitor, and will not always be silenced or kept off even by the most plausible confessor. Lord Eaglescairn has dropped some hints of his guilt to his own son, who is endeavouring to unravel the secret, which he is resolved to make known though it would render himself a beggar. Lord Iona is incapable, however, of popish expediency, and longs

to see justice done, if he only knew how. The priests are in constant terror that Lord Eaglescairn may send for you in his last hour to betray the whole secret, and therefore he is now beset so assiduously, that his own son never gains access to him alone. He cannot survive above a few days, or if he could, means would be taken to prevent that; and on his demise, every shilling he can dispose of, every piece of plate, every tea-spoon, every picture, every jewel, and every book, goes to Father Eustace for the Church."

"It is a very clear sweep, when a Jesuit takes the business in hand," said Lady Anne, shuddering. "What a narrow escape we have all had, and what a blaze of light is thrown on your mysterious history! It has come like a flash of lightning! I long now to tell dear mamma that her prayers for me are heard, and that the bird has escaped from the snare."

" 'The visit o'er, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home.' "

It was on the earliest dawn of a bright and beautiful morning, though the air was fiercely cold, when the travellers came in sight of Eaglescairn castle, with feelings it might be possible to imagine, but quite impossible to describe. Lady Anne, however, the least agitated, was the only talker, and her chief subject was to anticipate the joy with which she should be once more in the arms of her indulgent mother, and once more feel an entire confidence between them restored.

But few of the shutters had yet been opened in the old Castle, and Lady Anne, unwilling to create any disturbance while Lord Eaglescairn was in such an extremity of illness, caused her carriage to draw up beside the glass door, which entered at her mother's sitting-room, and which she was surprised to find wide open. Lady Anne, pointing for her two companions to sit down, smilingly approached the inner door, which led to Lady Stratharden's bed-room, and with a delightful anticipation of all the explanations she was about to give, of all the joy she was about to cause, and of all the glad affection with which she was about to be welcomed, Lady Anne, nodding with her own happy smile to Beatrice, disappeared, exclaiming, "What shall I say to dear mamma! But I never could study a part, and must leave that to the impulse of the moment. What a delightful meeting we shall have! I never was so long out of her sight before; and how much I have missed her!"

It might be two minutes, but it seemed not a moment, before Beatrice was startled off her seat by the sound, in Lady Stratharden's room, of a loud and piercing shriek, followed by a heavy fall. She rushed forward, threw open the door, and, in an agony of haste and alarm, nearly fell over the body of Lady Anne, stretched perfectly insensible on the floor. There was a silence in the room that might be felt. It was the silence of death; for when Beatrice looked up, she saw a sight that froze her very blood—the lifeless corpse of Lady

Stratharden, stretched on the bed, laid out for interment, and surrounded with all the gloomy paraphernalia of the grave,—the snowy shroud, the velvet pall, the glimmering lights——

It was so solemn and overwhelming a sight, that Beatrice, cold as ice with the shock, remained for several minutes immoveable, and almost turned to stone. She could neither speak nor move, but her eyes remained fastened on the dead face of Lady Stratharden, with an almost vacant gaze. That venerable countenance had something truly majestic in its silent repose. It bore the stamp of mental suffering, impressed on every wasted feature, and she carried still suspended round her neck, dear even in death itself, the enamelled miniature of Lady Anne, which the heart-broken mother always wore, and on which her tears even now seemed scarcely dry. A Bible lay still open on the table—the brightest sunshine poured its gorgeous light on this mournful scene; and Beatrice, while sprinkling water on the sufferer's face and rubbing her hands, awaited in silent speechless horror, almost fearing the moment when Lady Anne must at last recover to the dreadful consciousness of her misfortune.

The whole agony seemed to return at once. Lady Anne, with a groan like death itself, suddenly sat up, and grasping her long hair, and clenching her hands on each side of her forehead, gazed wildly around, while Beatrice raised her up and tried to lead her from the room;—but this was not to be. Lady Anne stood still for a moment

after she had risen, while a hundred sounds seemed ringing in her ears, and a hundred figures flitting before her eyes. The blood had rushed from her cheeks, as she riveted her hands over her face in unutterable anguish, and gently pushing Beatrice aside, she advanced to the bed, clasped the cold hand of Lady Stratharden in her own, and kissed her marble forehead. Lady Anne's grief was too deep for tears, but, as she gazed long and mournfully on the rigid features of death, a choking sob broke from her lips, and then in a voice trembling with grief, and scarcely audible, she exclaimed, "My own mother! I have broken your heart, and never now can ask your forgiveness—never forgive myself! This is the welcome I deserved."

Again Lady Anne, with heart-torn grief, solemnly kissed that venerable countenance, and seemed as if she were about to sink insensible on the bed. Beatrice was hastening to ring for help, when the door noiselessly opened, and the calm benevolent countenance of Lady Edith appeared there. Her face was pale and wan, but she looked mournfully composed, as she advanced towards Beatrice, and silently clasped her hand. The scene around was too awful for the indulgence of any vehement emotion, and astonished as Beatrice felt at the appearance of her beloved benefactress again in that house, not a word was uttered on either side. They exchanged a single glance of mutual surprise as well as of mutual affection, and then turned their whole thoughts and their

whole sympathy to Lady Anne, who might have been supposed insensible, but for the visible trembling of her whole frame. It shook with agony, yet not a sound proceeded from her lips, not a tear relieved her burning eyes, as she gazed at the livid face and the venerable white hair of the mother whose kind heart she had broken.

"My dear young friend," whispered Lady Edith, taking with mournful kindness a hand that seemed cold as death itself, "I have a message of comfort from your mother. Those lips can speak no more, but the last words they uttered were for you. 'She being dead yet speaketh.' Her last request was, that during the first shock of this event, and in this very room, her body being present, though her soul be departed, you would hear her message as a voice from the grave itself."

Lady Anne solemnly bent her head, placed her trembling hand on that of her deceased mother, kissed her cold cheek, and unable to raise her eyes said, in a low suppressed whisper,—“Tell me all. Tell me the worst at once.” A momentary convulsion passed over her face, and she added,—“If it were my death-warrant I deserve no better.”

The strong grief of Lady Anne became soothed while she gazed on the benevolent countenance of Lady Edith, and listened to the tones eloquent with sympathy and sorrow in which she added,—

“Your mother when I came here could scarcely articulate, but she desired me to give you her most heartfelt love and forgiveness.”

“My mother! my dear kind mamma!” exclaimed

Lady Anne, in tones that seemed more gasped than spoken, "Nature tells me now the truth. Yes! I broke your heart. Oh, when I think of the prayers and tears I cost you! Father Eustace made me delirious with vanity, promising that I should be canonized as a saint when disowning the first and dearest of all earthly duties."

"I was awakened at midnight on Tuesday," said Lady Edith, in a low suppressed voice, and evidently anxious not to aggravate the bewildering grief of her young listener; "a messenger had come from Eaglescairn, as your mother had been struck with palsy, and wished to see me instantly. I hurried here, and found that but a glimmering of life remained. Lady Stratharden had already exacted a solemn promise—almost an oath—from Lady Eaglescairn, that no Roman Catholic should enter this room until she were carried out of it; and yet you see, for the honour of that Church, they have decorated the room with Popish emblems, and give out that your mother died a papist. She left me the entire care of her remains, but Lady Eaglescairn has a right, of course, to adorn any room in her house as she pleases, therefore no one can interfere. Since your mother's death I have scarcely left her room night or day. It is the more to be lamented, therefore, that I was not here to soften the blow, when you so suddenly arrived, and were plunged at once into this most dismal scene."

Lady Edith became mournfully silent, while the heart of the sufferer relieved itself by many low

incoherent lamentations, till at length the burst of grief exhausted itself; and again kissing the forehead of her venerated parent, Lady Anne silently looked at Lady Edith entreating that she would now proceed.

"Your mother made an effort which astonished even the doctors to speak the message distinctly, which in dying it was Lady Stratharden's last wish that her child should receive."

Lady Anne solemnly closed her eyes, and said with melancholy fervour, "I trust it tells me something I may yet do, to mark my repentance."

While Lady Edith paused a moment to recollect accurately the words she had to repeat, Lady Anne's colour changed from white to red, and from red to white, and she heaved a suffocating sigh, when Lady Edith began in accents of tender commiseration,—“Your mother's message, Lady Anne, was this: ‘Tell my child, the last tie I had to life, that for her sake I would willingly die, and that I cannot but hope my sudden death now is ordained to do her more good than my life could have done. Tell her to look on my face before the coffin is closed, and to imagine she hears me ask that for one year—one short year of the many yet to come, she will withdraw herself entirely from the influence of Father Eustace, and of all who think or act with him. Tell Anne I could die in peace, not only resigned but happy, if she will give that year to calm, deliberate reading and reflection. She has been worked up to an unnatural delirium by the flatteries and by the

terrors presented to her young mind. Designing fortune-hunters such as Father Eustace are at work, with an almost magical influence, to rob my child of her inheritance, of her liberty, of her friends and of her conscience, as they have already robbed my Anne of her mother. Let her for a year, then, stand aloof from the possession of Father Eustace and his tribe, giving herself up to sober reflection, to rational society, and to fervent prayer."

When Lady Edith paused, her young auditor still continued to gaze earnestly as if she hoped to hear more from her kind monitress, who then added in a tone of solemn awe, "Your mother's voice now failed entirely, but she held out her feeble hand to me. Her eyes were turned upwards, evidently in most earnest prayer, and before many minutes had elapsed, she expired. No struggle took place, and only by finding her hand grow cold in my own, did I discover that she was dead. Your name was the last word on her dying lips."

Again Lady Anne clasped her hands over her face, but it was only for a moment, and then she slowly turned from gazing at the countenance of her dead mother, saying to Lady Edith, with deep emotion,—“All shall be as she desired. There shall not be one moment's hesitation or a single reserve. Lady Edith, my mother revered and loved you, as all must who ever knew you. Will you then receive her child as a funeral legacy into your own house? From this day let me not only

obey the wishes she did express, but also those she would have spoken, had they seemed possible. Will you give the kind shelter of your roof to an almost heart-broken orphan, and adopt a spoiled child as your own?"

Lady Anne threw herself into the extended arms of Lady Edith, and burst into a passion of tears. Long and almost frantically the young girl wept, but they were tears of nature and feeling that did her good, while Lady Edith from time to time whispered to the afflicted sufferer words of deep sympathy and of judicious consolation.

"I must not, cannot, will not be consoled," said Lady Anne, next day, though her tears had already become those of less hopeless anguish, and her thoughts seemed less verging to despair. "My whole existence must now be centered in one feeling of the deepest compunction, yet I cling to a friend like you, who will not break the bruised reed."

"My dear Lady Anne," said Lady Edith, kindly, "there is at Rome an appointed official called 'the Devil's Advocate,' whose business it is, when a saint is about to be canonized, to show any cause he can, why the honoured individual does not merit so supernatural a distinction. You need not, however, exercise that office against yourself, or exaggerate your own fault. I believe it was your sincere desire to serve God, which first led you into the snare of those who set aside the whole domestic constitution as appointed by God for our good. It is evident that in every

little family community, the father and mother are to be as monarchs, governing their children and servants with affection and authority. The unnatural usurpation of that sacred title 'Father' by a priest, is a total perversion of its meaning, and leads to mischief which cannot be named. The ladies who call themselves 'Mother Superior' have unjustly torn from another, as Father Eustace did from Lady Stratharden, the dearest privilege of nature, and fly directly in the face of Providence by doing so."

"True," said Lady Anne thoughtfully: "during one of my visits to the convent of St. Ignatia, a letter was given to sister Bridget, announcing the sudden death of her own mother; yet she was ordered to look and act as if nothing remarkable had occurred, and to pursue all her ordinary avocations."

"Of course! The extinction of every divinely-implanted attachment is the main object of those Jesuits, who are now insinuating themselves secretly into every home in England; yet no man will take warning, till the mine is blown up within his own house," observed Lady Edith. "The estrangement of husbands from their wives, of brothers from their sisters, of friends from their neighbours, is now in rapid but clandestine progress,—by books, by sermons, by secret agents, in the court and in the cottage; yet those who appointed a Board of Health to watch the progress of the cholera, keep no watch against that which will destroy both body and soul together."

"My poor mother saw it all, too late; and often in her sorrow for my estrangement used to remind me,—oh, how sadly!—of that text, 'If ye love not a brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen?' continued Lady Anne; "but from the moment I began to confess, the very power of thought or action seemed to leave me. I was under a spell, and nothing but the shock of this event could have broken it. Her death-knell has awakened me."

"For such a hope she was willing to die," said Lady Edith solemnly. "Certainly, Lady Anne, private confession is the main engine of papists for continuing to enslave their victims; and most diligently do they enforce it. I know for a positive fact that, very recently, within five miles of Westminster Abbey, a public platform was raised in a public street, adorned with crucifixes, images, and pictures. An Irish mob assembled there, with a moderate sprinkling of English intermixed—all drawn there by most blameable curiosity—and a portrait of the Virgin Mary, such as a very unskilful painter supposed her to have been, was carried round the crowd to be kissed. A priest then, in full canonicals, preached a sermon on the absolute necessity of confession. His words were taken down; and one of the anecdotes gravely told to that gaping multitude is well worth repeating."

"Let me hear it," said Lady Anne, on whose mind, though gnawed by the worm of a reproachful conscience, Lady Edith was producing the ano-

dyne effect which by her conversation she intended. "Father Eustace was gradually leading me on to that pitch of credulity which has no limit; and I should like now to hear such a story as he would have forced me, in the course of time, to believe."

"The popish legend was this," continued Lady Edith: "and in the year 1851, standing under the noble canopy of heaven, there was a London audience found capable of believing it!—A hermit, living alone in a distant forest, was considered so supremely holy, that pilgrims went in crowds to do him homage, until he died, when it was determined to bury him as so eminent a saint deserved. He was interred, therefore, in the chancel of the nearest chapel, with honours worthy of a canonized saint; but when his votaries returned next day to morning prayers they discovered, with astonishment, that his coffin had risen again to the surface of the ground. Deeply impressed with this miracle, they moved the hermit's body to another part of the church and buried it again; but again it was found reproduced upon the floor. It now occurred to his admirers that the hermit being so supremely holy, should be interred below the altar, which was accordingly done; and there it was hoped he might rest in peace, in a place so suitable to his merit. On the contrary, however, next day the obstinate coffin was not only up again, but wide open, and the dead saint sitting up in it. The multitude then humbly inquired wherefore it was that so good a man could not remain quietly in his grave; when the corpse



at length opened its mouth and acknowledged, that in the hour of death one sin had been overlooked at confession; therefore that sin had not been forgiven; and far from deserving to be buried as a saint at the altar, he must be cast into unconsecrated ground, as a lost sinner, unconfessed, and therefore unpardoned."

"The popish religion is all things to all men; and these are the fairy tales prepared for ignorant wonder-seekers among the poorer classes," observed Lady Anne, reflectively. "Like Eve, who fell because of her curiosity, my delusion was begun by having my own idle curiosity raised to see a popish service. Father Eustace, who has a forty-Jesuit power, and who was the lion's provider on that occasion, usually takes innumerable young people there, when supposed by their parents to be visiting relations, or attending an evening service in their own family-pew. The scene altogether is admirably got up. Such magnificent dresses! I felt it quite a grand piece of excitement also, at the evening receptions, to see the clergy kneel as they entered the drawing-room, with faces that expressed the very prostration of respect; and then a pompous full-dressed priest talking to poor little me, with a sort of superlative condescension that was quite overwhelming. I could not attend the popish service too often, and dear mamma thought I was always drinking tea with old Mrs. Courtney, as Father Eustace desired me to tell her so, saying he would take upon himself the whole sin, if there were any, of deceiving a Protestant parent for the good of his Church."

"Such is the teaching of a religion like that of Rome," said Lady Edith, "where the Bible is entirely suppressed, or only sold mysteriously in back-shops, to the very few who dare to wish for one. Lady Anne, you and I shall do the real work of life together now, continuing Christians on the rational, conscientious, and intellectual model of Scripture, in which I am sure you will find, as Beatrice and I have done, true happiness—long-enduring and satisfactory happiness. Such enjoyment as ours has been hitherto, seems to me almost a sample in hand of that state hereafter, to prepare for which life itself is bestowed.

"At thought of this,
The roused soul swells, boundless and sublime!"

Lord Eaglescain's illness was now really, or represented to be, so imminently dangerous that Lady Edith thought it necessary to postpone all inquiry respecting that great secret belonging to the birthright of Beatrice, which Bessie had in part discovered, but which must of course, on the earliest opportunity, be legally investigated. In the meanwhile it was impossible to gain access to the sufferer, or to believe the report of a word that he said; therefore, though Father Eustace was profuse in his information, Lady Edith and Beatrice agreed that they must postpone all measures until the death or recovery of Lord Eaglescain made it right for them to act, though in the meanwhile Lady Edith, at her own expense, sent a well-instructed lawyer to make some necessary inquiries at Corunna.

CHAPTER VIII.

"All farewells should be sudden when for ever."—BYRON.

"I am more certain that it is a duty of nature to preserve a good parent's life and happiness, than I am of any speculative point whatever."—POPE.

A FORTNIGHT had elapsed, during which Lady Anne resided at Heatherbrae in so agitated and nervous a state, that she engrossed the whole time and thoughts of Lady Edith and Beatrice, who read to her, talked to her, and left nothing undone that the most ingenious affection could do to reconcile her to life and to herself. With a morbid sensibility, very common to the afflicted, she made a duty of being miserable, and hugged to her very heart every subject of self-reproach, every source of sorrow, as if it would be treason against the memory of her beloved mother ever to feel happy again; yet, as Lady Edith reminded her, the first and last wish of Lady Stratharden had ever been to shield her from every passing cloud of mere momentary distress, and that she should bask in a perpetual sunshine of enjoyment.

Amidst all their affectionate anxiety for Lady Anne, there was scarcely a minute for Lady Edith and Beatrice to think of any other friends; yet, at length, with a feeling of sudden surprise they

one day remarked to each other that the Clintons had never once called, or sent to inquire for Lady Anne, or to see how they were themselves.

At length, on the second Sunday after her return home, Lady Edith resolved, as in former times, to visit Mrs. Clinton in passing, and was delighted, as she approached the gate, to observe her friend slowly approaching, but with so feeble and languid a step, that Lady Edith became at once convinced she must have been ill. To her surprise, Mrs. Clinton, on perceiving her, made a full stop, hesitated, and then turned hurriedly back, as if anxious to avoid a meeting; but Lady Edith felt this to be so unlikely, that she at once advanced to overtake Mrs. Clinton, and having, without difficulty, arrested the heavy lagging movement of the fugitive, she kindly laid her hand on her arm, and almost laughingly looked up at her old friend, intending, good-humouredly, to reproach her for this unusual flight.

When Mrs. Clinton slowly and unwillingly turned round, an exclamation of astonishment and consternation burst from the lips of Lady Edith, who stood aghast at the sight she saw; Mrs. Clinton's face was the image of death! She looked like one so entirely heart-broken, that all expression was extinct, and her eyes seemed like stone, incapable of tears. All her features spoke of—

“ The bursting heart, the tearless eye,
The cold and torpid frame,
The smother'd groan, the broken sigh,
The grief she dare not name.”

The friends looked at each other for a moment in silence, and then Mrs. Clinton, grasping the hand of Lady Edith with an affectionate pressure, made a sign not to be detained or followed, and was about slowly to enter the house, looking as if buried in a bewildering dream, when Lady Edith, with earnest kindness, clasped hold of her dress, exclaiming, "My dear Mrs. Clinton!—my dear friend!—tell me what has happened. You look like your own ghost! I have the right of one who loves you, Mrs. Clinton, to ask what is the matter? This must be something very dreadful! Why did you not send for me?"

Mrs. Clinton became more and more livid in her paleness, and still looked mournfully down as if unable to articulate. At length she answered in a low, broken, almost inaudible voice, "There are things that cannot and must not be told. You will soon hear all—too soon! Did you ever know an extremity of suffering, dear Lady Edith, to which even the kindest sympathy brings no comfort? The heart knoweth its own bitterness——"

"But I am not a stranger to intermeddle, I am a very old, and very attached friend," replied Lady Edith, in a tone of sympathising perplexity. "Dear Mrs. Clinton, our long intimacy entitles me to ask, and to know why you are so sadly, so alarmingly changed."

"Can you think of any circumstance that must deprive me for time and eternity of my husband, of my children, of my home—of all on earth that

is dear to me, except yourself?" said Mrs. Clinton, in a low tremulous whisper. Her expression bore the stamp of such acute anguish, that it seemed almost as if she were delirious; and when she attempted to proceed, a choking sob prevented her. She struggled for a moment to recover herself, and finding every effort vain, she hurried to her own door. There she turned round, and her bloodless face had a look of such frenzied grief, that Lady Edith never afterwards forgot the impression. Making a hurried and imperative sign not to be followed, Mrs. Clinton darted out of sight, and closed the door.

A dreadful suspicion rushed at once into the mind of Lady Edith that Mr. Clinton must have apostatized to Romanism. She had always thought that Mrs. Clinton merely liked to talk on theological subjects in her own somewhat superficial way; to coquette a little with mediæval pictures, music and architecture; and, in short, to play at monkery in the middle ages beside Father Eustace, who listened with such flattering attention to her most trifling remark, that it was very enticing, though no serious apprehension ever entered her head that she could be allured on to any sacrifice of principle. All that Mrs. Clinton had expected was, merely to skim lightly over the surface of controversial theology, herself seated on the coziest of arm-chairs on one side of a blazing winter fire, and her husband as comfortably ensconced in his own opposite. Hence she intended that they should lament together over the

prevalence of Romanism, going as near the edge of it themselves as they dared, rather sorry for others who became irretrievably victims, full of curiosity to hear the arguments by which their friends had become bewildered, exhausting the whole range of common-places in their censure of persons who go to extremes, and mildly hoping that some of the perverts might sooner or later, and somehow or other, be reclaimed. Father Eustace's influence with Mrs. Clinton had gone so far, but could go no further. Mrs. Lorraine's plan with Mr. Clinton was yet deeper and more successful; for she gradually imparted to his mind all the interest of a dark conspiracy, mysteriously carried on against the freedom, public and domestic, of Great Britain itself. From the moment she gained his ear, he was entrusted with plots against the Established Church; plans for besieging families; news of expected conversions; schemes for entrapping heiresses; manœuvres for attracting landed proprietors, and commissions, like a tamed elephant, to gain over his own brethren. Mr. Clinton's life had now become more exciting than that of any sportsman, and instead of quietly pursuing his small duties at Clanmarina, his sphere was not only England, but the world; his object, to subvert its government, its freedom, and its laws. He seemed to have been asleep in the quiet execution of professional duties, in the closet, in the pulpit, and beside the dying; but now, he was wide awake to subjects of sleepless interest. He was now incorporated into a great



body, and though personally no more than the very least of its little fingers, unable any longer to act or move of himself, he belonged to a Cardinal in red stockings, and to a Pope who carried the talisman of infallibility.

Lady Edith proceeded anxiously to chapel, where she had not been for several weeks, owing to her absence at Eaglescairn, and her arduous attendance subsequently on Lady Anne; but now she entered the sacred edifice with feelings of deep solicitude. To her surprise, the congregation, formerly so numerous and devout, was now reduced to one or two persons, who were gazing around with looks of vacant surprise, or of irreverent curiosity. It was no wonder they did so, for Lady Edith was thunderstruck at the entire alteration in the quiet little chapel, and she scarcely identified her old place of resort, now entirely re-modelled. It had become a miserable imitation of Romanism. A high rood-screen divided the congregation from a new stone altar, which had replaced the ancient communion table, formerly covered, as the rubric directs, "with a white cloth, and placed in some convenient part of the church;" a tawdry picture of St. Bridget, in the very worst theatrical taste of the French school, which Lady Edith had always observed in the collection at Eaglescairn with dislike, was now hung over the altar. In front of this stood a large gilt cross, nearly three feet high, and that was flanked by two tall wax candles, which, in spite of a scorching sun blazing in at every window, were lighted.

A superb altar-cloth of blue velvet was there, studded over with crosses and crowns. Each little gas-burner throughout the church was surmounted by a small iron cross; and the old Prayer-books, which Sir Evan had presented to the chapel, were all adorned by large gold crosses. New book-markers had also been placed in them of variously coloured ribbons, at the end of which little gilt images of the saints, about the size of a fourpenny piece, were suspended. Each of these ribbons had its own emblematical meaning, which, to young people fond of religious foppery, was mysteriously interesting. White ribbons were placed in the service for Baptism, red for the Communion office, and black for the Burial of the dead. The church was as full of flowers as Covent Garden market on the 1st of June; and a new reading-desk was placed about the middle of the small chapel.

Before Lady Edith had at all recovered her senses from the surprise of all this metamorphosis, she found herself listening to the prayers being intoned, a custom originating in very large overgrown cathedrals of old, where it was supposed to carry the sound further, but quite out of proportion to the miniature chapel at Clanmarina. Mr. Clinton, before the service begun, had stood, looking much excited, in the aisle, wearing a long black dress, reaching almost to the ground, and a black cap, which gave him quite the air of a grand inquisitor. He studiously turned his back towards the scanty congregation, and read the



first lesson in a strange mumbling tone, as if his only object were, not to be understood. His numerous genuflections, turning always to the east, reminded Lady Edith of the Grand Mufti; and he seemed determined to show the congregation that they had no part in the service, and no right to hear it. Every time he entered within the rood-screen, Mr. Clinton made a sign of the cross and bowed; and once or twice he knelt as immoveably before the centre of the altar, as if turned into one of the wooden images he worshipped.

When Lady Edith saw such a vision of Protestant Romanism within the quiet homely chapel which had so long witnessed the simple solemnities of a well-ordered Episcopal service, she asked herself if she were actually awake. When she thought of Mrs. Clinton's grief on this account, tears sprang into her own eyes, and she considered it no wonder that her friend had felt unwilling to accompany the congregation into such a scene. It was indeed evident that Mr. Clinton, already looking and acting so like a Popish priest, would soon be led on by Father Eustace to disown his marriage vow, and his Protestant faith; and though Lady Edith had intended to remain for the Holy Communion, she dared not now venture to stay for its sacred consolations, not knowing what extraordinary innovations contrary to her own faith and feelings might have been made in the solemn rite.

Lady Edith was leaving the house of a poor
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woman she had visited on her way home at the very moment when Mr. Clinton was passing on his road homewards, so that it became almost an inevitable piece of mutual politeness that they should walk along the road together, which accordingly they did, though both, for the first time, equally unwilling to associate.

They shook hands at first in silence, while Mr. Clinton tried to assume as matter-of-fact an aspect as he could command; but, nevertheless, he looked undeniably abashed. Lady Edith was, however, the most agitated of the two; but after a pause to recover herself, she said, in a low accent, and with a penetrating look that nothing could evade, "Mr. Clinton, I am desirous neither to mistake, nor to be mistaken; tell me, then, is it to a clergyman still in the Church of England that I speak, or to a deserter and apostate?"

"Judge me, Lady Edith, with your wonted candour," answered Mr. Clinton, evasively, and twirling his spectacles with nervous energy; "I have too long been a mere lukewarm Christian, or at best with the chill taken off. I am now greatly changed; and there may be much, perhaps, to startle and alarm your rather puritanical notions. My perplexities of mind have of late become a torture beyond bearing; and within the last few weeks, suddenly, without any remarkable addition to my store of facts or principles, it seems to me as if I could not any longer hold myself back from—"

"I understand you, Mr. Clinton. I am not

unprepared for this fearful acknowledgment, mournful as it is. From the time of Mrs. Lorraine's arrival at Clanmarina, Protestantism has become a mere dead deposit in your mind, not existing in your heart. You have for some weeks appeared to me a would-if-I-could-be Papist, and now you are one. You preached to-day the infallibility of human dictation in spiritual things, and the Divine authority of the visible Church; therefore, whether you apostatize sooner or later, you are sliding down an inclined plane, with nothing to stop your descent short of that superstition which prostrates your reason, your judgment, your principles, and every earthly tie of affection or duty."

"Lady Edith," replied Mr. Clinton, with an appearance of more solemn regret than he had before testified, "my regard for friends such as yourself, to whom I owe a lifetime of gratitude and esteem, has been one of the chief impediments to my entire conversion, or, at least, to my declaring it. Without repining, though with lasting sorrow, I could prepare to relinquish all hitherto precious to my heart,—my Protestant parish, my domestic habits, my former opinions, my ancient prejudices,—all but my old friendships, unless you are bigot enough to desire it. Let us, then, be better friends than ever for the future, and perhaps at last you may think as I do, and be as happy as I am."

"I know well the trick of your new associates, Mr. Clinton," said Lady Edith, with a melancholy

smile; "every now and then they will spread a report in Clanmarina that you are becoming a Protestant again, which gives them a pretext for publishing in our newspaper a letter to contradict the rumour, and to give a puff direct of your new opinions by saying that never before did you know peace or happiness. Of course, without the report being spread, there is no pretext for the contradiction, as no one can say, 'Very well, I thank you,' unless somebody first asks, 'How do you do?' Now, Mr. Clinton, do not for a moment suppose I could think so lightly of an apostasy on your part as to continue our acquaintance at all. From no point of view can I see it otherwise than as a death-blow to yourself, which ends our intercourse. It has become your duty to proselyte, it is mine to avoid the danger; by our ever being seen together, I should give the sanction of my example to others for exposing themselves to a siege in which they can gain nothing, and may lose all."

"You intend to become quite an alarmist among my old friends and parishioners," observed Mr. Clinton, with a deprecating smile, and rapidly fluctuating colour; "I trust they may not all desert one who wishes them well, and will do his best to serve them."

"Yes, by urging them to break loose from the limits of the Bible into the unlimited wilds of tradition! I trust, and believe, Mr. Clinton, that the congregation, to a single individual, will all forsake you. When the trumpet gives an uncertain sound it cannot lead us on to the battle.

Every head of a family ought to leave you at once, before the taint has reached one member of their households. I am a woman, and must, you know, speak my mind."

"You always did," observed Mr. Clinton, with a sad smile, "and you have a right to your own opinions, as I have to mine."

"Yes; while I remain a Protestant, I may think, speak, and act for myself, but you will soon be bound to obey the slightest nod from Rome, in obedience to that false superstition which is a mere forgery on the bank of truth," answered Lady Edith, in a tone of deep regret. "My own candid idea is, that you have been worked up to an actual delirium at Eaglescairn, that bleeding and blistering would do you more good now than controversy, and that, indeed, all those who are reeling over into idolatry, might be very advantageously ordered by their doctors a few months of calm domestic retirement in their own family circles, aloof from Papal controversy, and with an anodyne prescription for their mental disease of the most sensible Protestant works. At the end of a year the patient would look back on such a state as yours with much the same feelings that he would remember the delirium of a typhus fever. Now, Mr. Clinton, I wish you a long and very sorrowful farewell! The sight of you, probably soon to be a pervert, serves as the strongest warning I could receive, not to trust myself in Popish society. It should be a remarkable admonition for all Protestants to 'take heed lest they fall,'

that of those names inscribed at Oxford as having raised the monument recently built there to Cranmer and Ridley, more than a third have already been seduced into apostasy, and would now, perhaps, willingly burn those martyrs over again if they could ; among these new perverts many had long been dozing on towards indifferentism, and others were inflated with vanity or pride, but all are now alike prostrated in the dust before a foreign priest and a degrading superstition."

Mr. Clinton lingered for some moments, as if unwilling to bid his old friend a last adieu, and when Lady Edith turned away, the tears rolled down her aged cheeks with sorrowful emotion ; she held out her hand in silence to Mr. Clinton, who grasped it with all his old feeling revived for the moment of respectful attachment. The artificial expression of downcast sanctity in his well-drilled countenance gave way to a look of natural feeling, and he appeared again so like the Mr. Clinton of former and better days, that Lady Edith looked round as she retired, saying, "If you ever return to the old paths, Mr. Clinton, let me be the first to welcome you back."

"No," muttered Mr. Clinton to himself, in a tone of high excitement, "never :—

"All worldly goods and wealth, which once I loved,
I now do count but dross ;
My pride is to despise myself ; my joy
All insults, sneers, and slanders of mankind ;
No creature now I love.'"

The sun shone brightly one morning on Mr.

Clinton's little parsonage,—the large old apple-tree was shedding its blossoms in a white shower on the grassy lawn, and roses clustered round the five latticed windows, as well as over the low rustic porch,—all nature looked gay and *riante*, but nevertheless, Lady Edith thought or fancied that there was a silence so unusual there, and an uninhabited melancholy air about the house itself, which made her sad. She wished to see Mrs. Clinton on business of some consequence to a poor family in Clanmarina, and having repeatedly knocked at the door without any one appearing, she wondered more and more at the noiseless stillness of all within and without. Lady Edith looked around, sadly remembering what a scene of joyous usefulness that little cottage and garden had so long been, and what unlooked for changes were now impending. The Bishop of Inverness had announced a visitation to Clanmarina, in consequence of the representations made to him of the Popish doctrines which Mr. Clinton taught as Episcopalian, and there was no reason to suppose it possible that such a man as the Bishop of Inverness could allow him to continue thus preaching Romanism in a Protestant pulpit. Mr. Clinton had endeavoured to set up for being a martyr, under persecution, but it was a signal failure, as all the congregation were now aware that he literally did at Rome as Rome does, and attended the Popish mass during his whole residence at Eaglescairn, which his people did not consider to be a perfectly Protestant proceeding or a perfectly

fair one. If he received the emoluments of one Church and supported another, it was not serving two masters, but betraying one.

Lady Edith observed a recent trace of carriage-wheels on the gravel before Mr. Clinton's house, and the door of entrance stood ajar, but the silence remained unbroken, except by the repeated knocks of the visitor again and again and again for admission. Assuming at length the privilege of an old friend, as the business could not be postponed, she entered unannounced, and proceeded straight to the only sitting-room. There, to her utter surprise, stood the shutters only half open, the tea-things of the night before on the table, two candlesticks with extinguishers on, and the ashes unswept from the grate. All had a look of recent hurry and confusion, of desolation and misery. Papers and ends of rope were scattered in confusion on the floor, the refuse evidently of a hasty packing up; numerous letters lay torn to atoms in the grate, and almost every book had been taken from the shelves, which were empty.

Lady Edith looked around in dismay, and felt as if she had of late been born into a perfectly new world, so unlike were its unexpected changes and its painful vicissitudes to anything that in her peaceful course of action she had hitherto known. For several minutes the solitary visitor stood almost unconsciously gazing at this unexpected and most unaccountable confusion. Hitherto, if the Clintons were going merely to dine a few miles off with a neighbouring farmer, they men-

tioned this little piece of parish gossip a week before; and they scarcely ever left home for half a day, without calling to tell Lady Edith and Beatrice of this extraordinary dissipation,—but now!—where could they be gone?

Lady Edith wandered thoughtfully on towards Mrs. Clinton's own bed-room, where, having always formerly had the privilege of entering without even the previous ceremony of knocking, she now opened the door and walked in. The room appeared nearly dark, and the bed, which was turned down, had evidently not been slept in that night. With a feeling of greatly increased anxiety, Lady Edith turned away, intending if possible to find Mrs. Clinton's own maid-of-all-work, below stairs, when her progress was suddenly stopped by the sound of a low deep sob. It was repeated again and again, with a suffocating excess of grief apparently, which struck a chill into Lady Edith's very heart, as she hurried forward at once into the dressing-room.

A large arm-chair stood between Lady Edith and the door, but on advancing to the other side she discovered Mrs. Clinton prostrate on her knees, her hands riveted together and her face buried in the cushions. It was evident from Mrs. Clinton's evening dress that she had not been in bed all night, but she was now obviously engaged in such fervent prayer, that Lady Edith dared not by word or action interrupt so sacred a duty, therefore she stood for several minutes in solemn apprehension of what revelation was to follow.

Lady Edith intending to wait in the next room for an interview, was gliding almost noiselessly away, when Mrs. Clinton suddenly looked up. In a moment she rose, held out her hand to Lady Edith, and feebly attempted to give her a kind smile of welcome, but so ghastly was its expression that her alarmed visitor, unable to look at a face so convulsed with anguish, closed her eyes. The next moment Mrs. Clinton had thrown herself into the arms of Lady Edith, and burst into an agony of tears.

"My dear friend! my dearest Mrs. Clinton! tell me all," said Lady Edith, in soothing accents. "Where is your husband gone?"

"My husband! Dare I call him so any longer?" sobbed Mrs. Clinton, while a spasm of mental anguish contracted her almost livid features; and she whispered with evident difficulty the rest. "Last night, at the Romish chapel, he made his recantation. I do not believe Edward intended it an hour before! All is over! He has wrenched himself from every human tie; he has entered the monastery of Inverness. They wished me to become a nun of St. Ignatia, and that would divorce him, then he could be a priest. Let me die at once to serve Edward, but I cannot be an apostate."

"No," replied Lady Edith, soothingly, "you must live for your boys."

"They, too, are gone," sobbed Mrs. Clinton, resting her burning forehead on the shoulder of Lady Edith, and speaking in a voice faint with agony. "Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine took

my boys. He had got presentations for them both to the gratis college at Inverness. The priests had settled it all a month since; but I, the wretched wife and still more wretched mother, never knew it—never, never!”

Mrs. Clinton, usually so quiet and passive, tossed her arms wildly up, and clasped her hands above her head, with a look of such frantic grief that her senses seemed forsaking her, while she added, in hurried accents, and in so unearthly a voice that Lady Edith felt paralysed, “We are to meet no more! My husband believes it would be a sin ever to see his faithful wife again.”

“He thinks,” replied Lady Edith sadly, “by making this world a purgatory, to escape one in the world to come. What a fatal, cruel delusion!”

“I always knew,” added Mrs. Clinton, solemnly, “that death at last must part us, and I felt, in some degree, prepared for that; one or other, I knew, must survive in solitary sorrow to mourn for the other:—

“‘There is no union here on earth,
That finds not here an end.’

But Father Eustace has brought on me this long agony without death, for which I was totally—totally unprepared. God help us all! May my senses not forsake me!”

Lady Edith felt that words were wasted in offering consolation to such sorrow as this; but affectionately leading Mrs. Clinton to the sofa, she gently placed her on it, and, kneeling by her side, she in faltering accents of deep emotion offered up

a short and fervent prayer for her heart-stricken friend. It was full of sympathy, full of affection, and at the same time full of an abounding faith in the merciful superintendence of God, which nothing on earth could shake.

From henceforth Mrs. Clinton's home was no longer her own, and she had few, very few possessions. Her active life had been one of daily self-denial; and during the many years of her married happiness, she had never spent a frivolous shilling. Now nothing was left her but a few books by the best Protestant authors, and her own inestimable Bible.

"I wonder what degree of grief kills people, if mine does not!" said Mrs. Clinton, some hours after, in a faint and tremulous voice, to Lady Edith, who held her cold, clammy, death-like hand; "I shall soon be in my grave, or yet more probably, in a lunatic asylum."

"No, dear Mrs. Clinton; you will to-night be in my house, and remain there always among those who, with their whole hearts, love, honour, and respect you. At my home, this evening, we must all unite in prayer for your unhappy husband. This is a delirium that comes over people, quite beyond the reach of reasoning, and perfectly untouched by argument or common sense; it is like the effect of magic; but let us hope all things, and believe all things possible."

"My boys, too! my darling boys! Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine did not even allow me to take leave of them; they were gone before I found out the danger." Mrs. Clinton rocked her-

self to and fro, with her hands clenched over her forehead, adding, "He who never had wife or child, cannot feel for me. I might as well expect to find fire burning in a marble statue as pity in Father Eustace. My dear, darling boys!"

"They go, dear Mrs. Clinton, fortified by your prayers these many long years, and by your best instructions."

"Yes; but, dear Lady Edith, for some time past their own father has been reading to our boys preparatory books that I could not approve: little *novellettes*, by English clergymen, full of allegorical phantoms, fairies, and magic, to prepare their young minds for supernatural visions and fictitious miracles. Children may easily be educated for superstitious horrors, because that taste is, like every other popish error, founded on fallen human nature."

"I know the sort of books. Protestant parents call them 'so pretty,' and do not see the poison they contain. They have allegories full of imaginative religion, describing children, for instance, who carry palm branches in their hands up the hill of life, which withered or drooped if they sinned; or whose garments glistened with supernatural light while they crossed a dark stream, but became spotted with black when they were wicked. Such fables train their minds in the way they are now intended to go. I remember nurse Barton, whom you dismissed years ago, because, to save herself trouble in training the children to rational obedience, she told them, and they implicitly be-

lieved, that a black man would carry them away if they were naughty. How undoubtingly they credited that pious fraud! and nurse Barton's lie was quite a rehearsal of the popish system—a bad action for a good end.”

“ Their father has fallen at once into the snare of Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine; therefore what hope can I have that my boys shall be preserved from it?” said Mrs. Clinton, with hopeless despondency; “ their young minds will be ruined by my own husband, whom I have always, of course, taught them to reverence and believe. When he misdirects them, what hope can there be!”

Mrs. Clinton started up and paced hurriedly about the room for some time, then sinking exhausted on the sofa, she grasped Lady Edith's hand, saying, “ You are right, my best friend, as well as kind. If I am to survive this blow,—if my faculties are still to exist, it must be by leaving every fond association of home, every object to remind me of the loved and lost. I am now a childless widow. Let me go, then, with the dearest friend that remains to one so heart-broken. My obedience to God must now be shown, by living—oh, how disconsolately! on—if such be His will, and by living on to His glory, if that be possible.”

The hospitable cottage of Heatherbrae was like Prince Ahmed's fairy tent, which could be folded into a nutshell or expanded to hold an army,—or like a round dinner-table, which, whatever numbers may assemble, could always hold one more guest.

Lady Edith and Beatrice made every arrangement for the removal of Mrs. Clinton, who seemed stunned, without even the power of thought, and her usual energy was totally extinct, so that she appeared unable to fix her afflicted mind upon anything. They anticipated every wish that she could have formed, and considered every feeling, until at length all was ready; and the poor sufferer, scarcely sensible of what passed, found herself in a small, but most comfortable bed-room at Heatherbrae. There the quiet and fresh air, the cheerful sunshine, the birds and flowers, and above all, the soothing sympathy of Lady Edith, might have revived any spirit but that of so cruelly-bereaved a wife and mother. Mrs. Clinton's very heart seemed burned to the socket, while day after day she sat beside the open casement, endeavouring to read or to work; but the bright sunny landscape appeared as if it scorned such misery as hers; while now and then, with parched lips, feverish cheeks and distended eyes, she gazed for a moment towards her old home, sighed heavily over the memories of all her past life, and prayerfully tried to submit implicitly, in heart and soul, to the divinely-appointed trials of her now gloomy existence.

"Nature hath assign'd

Two sovereign remedies for human grief:

Religion, surest, firmest, first and best,

Strength to the weak, and to the wounded balm;

And strenuous action next."—*Southey*.

Some days after her arrival at Heatherbrae, Mrs. Clinton, looking like a living spectre, though

the first impetuosity of her anguish was subsided, had been seated some time beside Lady Edith, listening to her conversation, which was like balm poured into an aching wound, when the door was suddenly thrown wide open, there was an outcry of outrageous joy in the passage, and before she had time for so much as an exclamation of surprise, the two boys had rushed into their mother's arms.

"Mamma!" exclaimed the eldest, in accents trembling with delight, "we have found our own way back! Old John was driving the mail-cart from Inverness, when we saw him from the windows of that horrid place. I asked him to take us with him, so he waited—and here we are. Why did Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine carry us away? Ned and I hated that school. We were to be punished for not kneeling to one of those dolls dressed in gold; but I knew the second commandment better than to agree. Now, mamma, pray keep us at home. We were sure you would wish us to leave such naughty people—so foolish, too, and very cruel to Ned and me."

Mrs. Clinton, her lips the hue of ashes, her cheek white as death, folded the two boys in her arms, and burst into an hysterical agony of tears. It appeared as if her very soul would part from her body in this extremity of trial; for the rolling waves of her misery seemed to come faster and heavier on her the longer she clasped to her heart these children, who would soon, she knew, be torn from her again by their perverted father.

“Mamma, are you not glad to see us?” exclaimed Alfred, the eldest, with a look of injured feeling. “Did I do wrong in coming? We can both go back if you bid us. I thought you would be so happy to see me again, mamma!”

The boy’s lip quivered with wounded sensibility, and he burst into tears. Mrs. Clinton still embracing him, attempted, in a low suffocating tone, to answer; but her voice was extinct, and her whole countenance assumed the hue and the fixedness of marble. The very life-blood was frozen within her; for every word spoken by the child planted a dagger in her heart; while he, clinging fondly to her side, looked wonderingly up at her face, in which was an unmistakeable expression of livid grief, and said, “I will do anything that you bid me, mamma! Are we really, *really* to go back and do all that those curious people desire? Are we to kiss those nasty old bones, and to kneel before that doll with the gold muslin frock? I like my own old religion best, mamma, without any dolls or beads. I am not accustomed to lick the floor with my tongue; but if you say that it is right, we must try. You know, mamma, you always told us yourself—and so did papa—”

“God help me!” said Mrs. Clinton, in a tone of piercing anguish. “Oh, that the earth would cover me! My boys—my darling boys! Look at your heart-broken mother, and remember this hour for ever and ever. All the grief you see is because you must soon be taken from me again; because you are to be taught this new religion,

which gives you magical tales instead of the Bible, and which teaches you to obey the will of Father Eustace instead of God's will."

"Nothing can ever make me do that," said the boy, his young face assuming a look of seriousness. "We shall stay with our own mamma, and learn from you to be good, as we used to do. You always said that God had given us to you, on purpose that you might teach us right, and now we shall try to obey only you and papa. Nothing shall take us away, unless you say we are to go."

Mrs. Clinton sunk back on the sofa, her eyes distended, and her knees trembling with agony, while with a bewildered look she glanced around, as if seeking for assistance, but unable to find any.

Lady Edith gazed with deep emotion at the look of honest sturdy resolution lighting up the young boy's handsome countenance, and her usually brave heart sunk with sorrowful apprehension, knowing how little even the strongest natures are fitted to cope with priestcraft, and especially with Jesuit-craft.

In consequence of much that Lady Edith had heard from her heart-broken guest, a strong conviction gradually settled on her mind how impossible it would be to discover any remains of good sense or right feeling in Mr. Clinton, who was now apparently in the highest pitch of fanaticism. Like all new converts, he was perfectly simmering with frantic zeal, and certainly no red-hot papist who ever fired a faggot at Smithfield could be compared to him.

From all that Lady Edith heard of Mr. Clinton now, it seemed as if her once-esteemed friend had fallen under the spell of some gloomy sorcerer, and as if he had no more heart or intellect left than could be contained in a hazel-nut, leaving plenty of room to spare. The skilful training of Mrs. Lorraine had evidently brought him to such a state of mind as that of St. Francis de Sales and Madame de Chantal, by the same sort of sentimental Platonic attachment; and the influence gained over Bessie for a time by Father Eustace had been on a somewhat similar plan. It was agony even to Lady Edith, a comparative stranger, when she saw the brave little spirit of that noble boy, Alfred Clinton, flashing in his eyes while stoutly declaring his purpose to struggle against a separation from his own mother, and when she knew that the bold little fellow was sure to be conquered. Nature can only bear a certain amount of suffering, and survive. There was something, perfectly overawing in the extremity of Mrs. Clinton's anguish, when, after vainly attempting to speak, her voice became suffocated with grief, and clasping her son, with a look of death-like anguish, in her arms, she fainted.

The unconscious mother was carried to bed, in a state of merciful suspension from suffering, and days passed over her head in frightful delirium, so that fears were entertained by the doctors lest the shock to her intellects might be incurable. When Mrs. Clinton recovered her recollection, the boys had been already reclaimed

by their father, to be kept under Jesuit guidance for ever.

Who can measure the power of human nature to suffer and live on ! It seemed as if ten years of wasting anguish had gone over the head of Mrs. Clinton when she at length awoke from her trance-like state to the vague and dizzying consciousness of her own utter misery. She felt a confused and bewildering sensation of desolate wretchedness, a dull, heavy, lifeless sorrow, which finally formed itself into the one bitter consciousness that home, husband, and children were hers no more. While grief seemed gnawing at her heart-strings, Mrs. Clinton appeared to have wept her brain dry, for not a tear would flow, but she felt a shuddering consciousness of the long-enduring misery to come hereafter, as she trod the weary road of life without sunshine or hope.

"My dear Mrs. Clinton," said the kind-hearted Beatrice, "it is impossible not to feel misfortunes such as yours ; but in this world of changes, try still to hope—try to look for better days."

"They must come more rapidly than time ever travels, or my broken spirit will be at rest," replied Mrs. Clinton, whose heart nearly burst as she uttered the words. "There is a chain of inexpressible misery around me. Mine is a sorrow that knows not the name of consolation. A smouldering fire ! I have not long to live, and nothing to live for. Oh, teach me, if you can, to forget ; but you cannot teach me not to mourn and die."

“How truly did the saddest of all poets say that—

“‘The heart may break, and yet brokenly live on,’”

replied Lady Edith. “Though that sun can no longer charm away for you the gloom of nature, a better light, dear Mrs. Clinton, will reach your soul. Mere nature would show you the world now as a dreary desert with not a green spot for hope to rest on. Life seems to you a very long and dreary, and very crooked road; but trust in that God with whom your prayers, during a lifetime, are now registered for ever.”

Mrs. Clinton neither spoke nor opened her eyes, but wished she could have remained for ever in a state of unconsciousness. Every overstrained nerve in her body seemed on the crack, but Lady Edith held her lifeless hand, still cold as death. At length a tremor shook her frame, a low convulsive sigh burst from her heart, and she attempted, in a faint gasping voice, to ask for her boys.

There arises in many afflicted minds, at last, a strange, unnatural luxury in brooding over sorrow, and in hoarding up every source of anguish. Mrs. Clinton, from that hour, repeated to herself with growing despondency, that she was alone in the world now, forsaken for ever; that every fibre of hope was torn up by the root and withered; that the sting of death itself could be nothing compared to the sting of life such as hers. Meanwhile, Lady Edith and Beatrice, with ceaseless sympathy, tried to render her grief less abject,

and to rouse in her the more hopeful spirit of Christian confidence in the merciful benevolence of God, till at length her tears became so softened that they only melted, but did not wither up her suffering heart, for she could look to the future as the sailor looks through his telescope for the distant prospect beyond.

"I grant that the stroke which has laid thy hopes low,
Is perhaps the severest that nature can know ;
If hope but deferr'd may cause sickness of heart,
How dreadful to see it for ever depart !" — *Barton.*

CHAPTER IX.

"We live to pleasure when we live to God."

DODDRIDGE.

ALL men sail onwards in life under sealed orders, not knowing what a day, or even an hour, is to bring forth; but the Christian is ready to trim his sails and point his helm so as to follow the line of duty as it is step by step revealed, ever willing to welcome events as they come, because he recognises the hand that sends them. The morning dawned, on the 25th of July, 1852, Sir Allan's birthday, when he came of age, and was expected to sign the fatal deed, already prepared on parchment, and with all the due formalities, which Lady Anne told Lady Edith she had seen on the table of Father Eustace, by which he alienated from himself and from his heirs for ever, that noble property of Clanmarina, and of Cairngorum Castle, which had belonged for centuries to the clan M^cAlpine, but which, having now fallen to the last heir of entail, was already almost within grasp of the Jesuits.

They were no ordinary tears which fell from the aged eyes of Lady Edith Tremorne, as she

remembered the former birth-days of Allan, when prayers of thankfulness from lips now silent for ever, were mingled with every rational and innocent enjoyment of social intercourse. They were no ordinary tears with which Lady Edith looked out that day from her window at the smiling village, once embellished by the well-directed enthusiasm of Sir Evan, and now glowing under the bright tints of a rising sun, unconscious of its impending doom. They were bitter tears, indeed, with which Lady Edith contrasted the industrious prosperity of Protestant Clanmarina with that Popish beggarly portion of the hamlet, robbed of all its income by the domination of a grasping and most expensive superstition.

Very different days from hitherto must now befall the honest-hearted, sound-headed villagers,—those Bible Christians, to whose welfare Lady Edith was so entirely devoted; and from henceforth her teaching of the children, as well as her care of the sick, would be sternly discouraged. Even her continuing to reside at Heatherbrae must be an unwelcome intrusion on the new proprietors; but she steadily resolved, while life remained, to brave every difficulty among the old clansmen of M^cAlpine. “No religion utterly strips people like Jesuitism,” thought Lady Edith mournfully; “but it is the triumph of its superstition that a convert like Allan shall be born into Jesuitism naked as when he was born into the world, for the very clothes he is to wear are sent to him by the priests. Sir Evan’s picture, his mother’s hair,

my own letters, all must be forfeited ; and if he even reserves an old nail or a bit of twine to be his own, he breaks his vow of poverty. Allan, being too truthful and honest for their purposes, will not be actively employed, but will be consigned to the depths of La Trappe for life, the willing victim of a delirious infatuation. God help that poor boy ! He is beyond the reach of all who really love him !” exclaimed Lady Edith, leaning heavily on the arm of Beatrice, as they walked out together. “ Will he pay me his promised visit to-day ? He pledged himself solemnly to give me one last interview. It would be a melancholy comfort yet.”

“ He dare not trust himself, and he will not be trusted by the priests,” replied Lady Anne, sadly. “ Father Ambrose, his uncle, was obliged yesterday to go abroad, but the spell of Father Eustace’s eye is still upon him. They will not allow him to see his old haunts, and I believe Sir Allan could more easily face a regiment of artillery now, than a group of old friends like us. No, he will not, and dare not come.”

“ Certainly not,” added Beatrice, with sorrowful despondency ; and as nothing is more provoking sometimes than to be agreed with in opinion, so Lady Anne felt it now. “ Allan’s tether will not be extended to this house, and the iron bars must very soon stand between him and us for ever. The portcullis falls to-day.”

“ Could we not get up a *de lunatico inquirendo* ?” asked Lady Anne, with a mournful attempt

at mirth. "I am sure two months ago it would have been merciful to shut me up under Dr. M^cIndre, rather than under Father Eustace ! There is a death-cloud now over my remembrance of those days, never to be removed. I felt as if pounded in a mortar with the weight of that fearful blow which awoke me ; and who would not wish Sir Allan emancipated, even if the remedy were as severe ! Certainly, as a monk is considered dead to the world when he enters a monastery, he should at once be succeeded by his nearest sane relative. The most distant cousin is a nearer heir than the Pope."

Lady Edith and her three companions had gone out before breakfast to gather some fresh dewy buds from a moss-rose bush which almost overhung the high road, and were in earnest conversation on the hideous prospect of Sir Allan's ruin, when Beatrice suddenly observed at some distance a horse and its rider, not at all agreed as to the way they were to take. The spirited animal reared and plunged frightfully, while the skilful horseman, enveloped in a cloud of dust, so that she could scarcely see him, kept his seat with admirable dexterity. The conflict was long and desperate, but at length the rein suddenly broke, the horse sprung forward like a cat, the rider lost his seat, and Beatrice, with a scream of dismay, pointed to him prostrate on the road. A moment more and the horse was at full speed towards the place where the ladies had rushed out on the highway, and the unfortunate rider's foot being

entangled in the stirrup, he was dragged helplessly along the ground.

"This road is narrow—let us make a chain across it," exclaimed Lady Edith, steadily planting herself in the centre, while the other ladies hand-in-hand instantly formed a line which could not be passed. As the excited animal approached this barrier, he slackened his speed, and at length paused as if doubtful whether to turn or advance.

Lady Edith then speaking gently and approaching slowly, succeeded in seizing an end of the broken rein, and Beatrice in a moment cut the stirrup-strap, so as completely to disengage the prostrate rider's foot. It was the work of a moment, and the horse then left to himself galloped, fleet as the wind, out of sight towards Eaglescain Castle.

The horseman lay apparently dead, his coat torn, his face disfigured, and his whole person so dabbled and besmeared with blood and dust, that no one could recognise him; till at length Lady Anne exclaimed with a shriek of sudden horror, "It is Sir Allan!" Another glance, and Lady Edith saw that it was so. Meanwhile the servants, by her orders, had brought out a mattress on which the insensible sufferer was laid. They bore him carefully into the cottage, and a heavy moan, when M^cRonald laid him on the bed, was the only sign he gave of life and of suffering.

Lady Edith, with solemn anxiety too great for utterance, had him placed in her own room, and sent instantly for the nearest advice, not only

from Clanmarina, but also from Inverness. Scarcely a spark of life lingered in that shattered body, and the doctors, after a long consultation, said the head had been so much injured that a brain fever was greatly to be apprehended; at all events, Dr. Campbell said that for weeks, or perhaps months, if consciousness were restored, he must be kept perfectly and intensely quiet, or the consequences of the least emotion would be almost immediately fatal.

Lady Edith in the depths of her sorrow for Allan's very imminent danger, felt one gleam of actual joy. Her own beloved Allan must remain under her roof, and if he lived, no earthly power could for months to come take the beloved sufferer from her affectionate care. She gazed at his livid face, begrimed with blood and rigid as death, and listened with a look of searching and fearful anxiety to Dr. Campbell, who gave her very hopeless encouragement by assuring her, that he had once, but only once, seen a case as bad, in which the patient recovered. Still Lady Edith clung to hope, and felt almost ashamed of the irresistible pleasure it was to her, in spite of all his sufferings and danger, when she saw Allan delivered, for a time at least, from those who would have consigned him for life to an imprisonment worse than death. While prayers for the best of blessings on him streamed from her lips, Lady Edith felt the full comfort of that deep conviction, engrained into her mind, that whatever happens to any individual is by the special direc-

tion of that wise Providence who knows and does what is best. An obstinate hope fastened itself into her mind, that perhaps the granting of her own fervent prayers might be consistent with the Divine will towards Allan, and that he might at last become renovated in mind as well as in body, into the Allan of happier days.

"Do you suppose the paper has been signed that makes Allan a beggar, and Clanmarina a ruined village?" asked Lady Edith with deep anxiety of Lady Anne. "The Jesuits are not men to delay an hour grasping what they can."

"Most probably the deed was signed when I saw it, with a false date, to make it legal now," replied Lady Anne thoughtfully; "Father Eustace intended to have done so with my documents."

"Even if Allan be utterly stripped, his soul, dearer to me than all beside, may yet be snatched from slavery in this life, and from destruction in the life to come;" said Lady Edith solemnly, while covering her face with her hands in a state of irresistible pleasure that such a hope yet remained to her; and that pleasure was redoubled when Dr. Campbell entered the room to announce that, by means of bleeding the patient within an inch of his life, he had been rendered conscious, though his existence depended on perfect quietness of mind and body.

When all that medical aid could do had been done, and Allan in the darkened room was laid quiet, breathing and apparently sensible, though

unable to speak, Lady Edith requested Dr. Campbell himself to call at Eaglescairn Castle, on his way back towards Inverness, there to give information of the accident, and to mention his own injunctions as to the perfect repose, on preserving which, Sir Allan's life evidently depended. Not knowing how to anticipate that Father Eustace would act, Lady Edith prepared herself for all contingencies, and felt scarcely surprised, though very much annoyed, when within the very shortest period possible, a chariot and four arrived at her little garden-gate, from which alighted Lady Eaglescairn escorted by Father Eustace.

There was an aspect of extreme agitation and perplexity in both their countenances, perfectly natural in so sudden a calamity ; but nevertheless Lady Edith could not but hope that some part of their evident chagrin might spring from apprehension lest the deed of conveyance had not yet become valid which was to make Sir Allan a beggar,—which was to enrich his advisers,—which was to make the Chief of M^cAlpine partner in a concern that caused every shareholder to be a bankrupt slave for life,—which was to make Father Eustace despotic lord of all he surveyed.

The noise of the carriage, of the footsteps, of the voices outside the window, reached Lady Edith when silently seated beside her scarcely breathing charge. Rising, therefore, cautiously, she stole out of the room, and almost flew down stairs to prevent the visitors from gaining access within her porch, as she knew that once in the house, it

would be impossible to keep out or to turn out the priest, without such a scene as would probably cost Allan his life. Father Eustace knew, as she did, that once in that room he would become master there. Lady Edith hurried out by the glass door of her own sitting-room, and gliding hastily round to the front entrance, met the party and stopped them as Father Eustace was about to ring a peremptory peal at the bell.

"My patient shows very faint signs of life," said Lady Edith, endeavouring to suppress all outward evidence of agitation, and addressing her intended visitors with very distant politeness; "if a mere pin dropped in my small house it might startle him, and the slightest disturbance would extinguish all our hopes. You will therefore agree with me, I trust, Lady Eaglescain, that only one person should attend upon Sir Allan."

"Certainly, and that one shall be myself," replied Father Eustace, with an eye as keen as that of any wild animal watching for its prey, and advancing eagerly towards the door. "It is a duty which I came here resolved to do, towards a valued member of my flock."

"I have no proof to what flock Sir Allan belongs. No clergyman of any creed shall have access to my guest until he asks to see one and names him," replied Lady Edith firmly. "I have Dr. Campbell's authority for saying that the smallest excitement would cost Sir Allan his very life,—that faint spark of life which remains. My

patient has no relatives within reach, and as the kind providence of God has thrown him again on my care, no inducement can make me admit any one into his room but myself and the sick-nurse, till Dr. Campbell gives an explicit order that I shall."

Lady Edith looked up steadily to meet the infuriated eye of Father Eustace, and certainly the stoic had for that moment forgotten his philosophy when he added threateningly between his set teeth:—

"I must see M^cAlpine. Lady Edith, I never either loved or hated in vain, and if you hinder my seeing Sir Allan you will repent it. I know that in general you are as hospitable as an Arab. Give me, then, under your roof a crust of bread and a nook in which to rest."

"Nothing short of death could be more unwelcome to me in that room than yourself, sir; and, as Allan needs nothing but quiet, that is a luxury easily obtained, of which in my cottage he shall be secure. Every human being must unite in wishing to avert the danger of a brain-fever from the sufferer, by leaving him undisturbed."

"Wherever duty calls, no impediment can prevent my going," replied Father Eustace sternly. "If you stop me, it is at your peril. Sir Allan needs the offices of my Church, and he shall have them."

"Not while this house is mine and Dr. Campbell forbids your entrance. For many days Sir Allan can require nothing, as he is forbidden to

speaking or even to think. It is now distinctly the will of Providence that my patient shall thus be aloof from all intercourse with any of us. All that you or I can do is, to pray for him."

With these words Lady Edith gravely but politely took leave, and was retreating through the glass door, when she observed Father Eustace deliberately advance to the front entrance and give an authoritative knock. She instantly followed him, and, as M^cRonald's fine soldier-like figure appeared at the door, she turned round saying with a half smile, "You see, sir, my house is not only my castle, but better garrisoned than you expected. Any attempt to intrude here will certainly be defeated."

Independently of all the unspeakable sorrow that M^cRonald had suffered on account of his grand-daughter Bessie, he always was a perfect Covenanter of the old school in his horror of a Romish priest. From boyhood he had classed Popish superstition with Pagan idolatry and Mahometan delusion, as being all perfectly on a par; no sooner therefore had he received Lady Edith's sanction for keeping out "the Cardinal of Clan-marina," as Father Eustace was now frequently called, than with a look of quiet determination, such as he wore when heading the forlorn hope at Bergen-op-Zoom, he planted himself in the doorway, and ten stout men could not have forced the passage. M^cRonald abhorred Father Eustace with his whole heart and soul, but the old soldier's manner was perfectly respectful. He would will-

ingly have seen the misleader of Bessie dead at his feet, but discipline was strong within him, and he merely looked like a figure in cast-iron, modelled to represent passive determination.

"Let me see Sir Allan for a moment," said Father Eustace, trying to advance. "My good man——"

"I am not a good man,—at least not as you mean, sir," interrupted M^c Ronald, firmly placing himself in his old sentinel's attitude; "there is no pass-word here."

"In the name of the Church, allow me to enter," said Father Eustace in a tone that would have overawed a whole congregation of Papists, but it fell on the ear of M^c Ronald, who was, when necessary, gloriously obstinate, like foam on a precipice. "Old man, if you oppose my will, which is the will of the Church, and therefore the will of One greater than the Church, may no sun ever shine on your grave. I must see Sir Allan instantly, and I shall."

M^c Ronald merely made a military salute, and muttered to himself in an under-tone the old proverb, "Threatened men live long."

"You are refusing the privileges of the Church to one of her most devoted proselytes, and braving all the frightful consequences of doing so," said Father Eustace in a tone of suppressed fury. "It would be Sir Allan's first wish, if he dies, to secure his own salvation by dying in the habit of our order."

"And while doing so," said Lady Edith drily, yet

almost smiling at the priest's self-satisfied audacity, "to leave your order all his property, present or to come. Really, sir, I most heartily wish, for the sake of peace at Clanmarina, that the Pope would abdicate in your favour. There would be at Rome a wider scope afforded to your genius for priestly domination."

"Infernal heretic!" muttered Father Eustace malignantly.

"The term which you apply to me of 'a heretic,' means a wilful choice of error, knowing it to be error, therefore I have no intention ever to deserve that nick-name of reproach," said Lady Edith calmly. "In what terms the misleader of Sir Allan deserves to be spoken of, there can be but one opinion amongst honest men, a fraternity to which you are, I fear, a stranger."

"Madam," said the infuriated Father Eustace, "I am a priest. For your own sake remember that to affront a priest is one of those sins for which there is in our Church no absolution. We term it a reserved case."

"Those who made these laws are the priests who benefit by them," said Lady Edith, turning away with a conviction that she spoke to one very far below contempt. "If the means used by you and your associates to entice converts, were used to bring Mahometans round to Christianity, who could ask the blessing of God upon them? Have you then really convinced yourself that such a guerilla warfare is justifiable?"

Father Eustace, seeing how impossible it would

be to out-talk or to out-mancœuvre Lady Edith into the smallest concession, where duty, principle, and affection bid her be firm, unwillingly turned away, while Lady Edith quietly enjoined the well-pleased M^cRonald, during the next month, never to open the entrance-door without keeping the chain upon it. Well might the baffled monk have then exclaimed in angry bitterness of spite:—

“ Oh ! to have pray'd and toil'd—and lied—for this ! ”

M^cRonald did not certainly reply to Lady Edith's repeated injunctions against admitting any visitor to her drawing-room, in the words of Goldsmith's Good-natured Man, “ Show him up ? With all my heart ! Up or down, all's one to me.” The old veteran's thoughts as he paced before the door like a sentinel, might have been somewhat in accordance with the words of Milton, though not so eloquently expressed :—

“ Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition ; and the truth
With artful superstition and traditions taint,
Left only in these written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places and titles, and with these to join
Secular power ; though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
To all believers.”

CHAPTER X.

"Sloth and folly
Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and hazard,
And make the impossibility they fear."—Rowe.

"He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust."
Macbeth.

For many days and nights there had been in Sir Allan's room a silence and darkness like the tomb itself, while the sun rose and sunk and rose again, unobserved by those who anxiously watched by the sick-bed on which he lay tossing and delirious with fever.

The tall, portly, rather bustling sick-nurse sent by Dr. Campbell from Inverness, seemed one Friday to have become unusually quiet, and sat cowering the whole afternoon close to Sir Allan's pillow, but making signs for every one who entered the room to remain very quiet, and to keep at a distance. She complained of a severe toothache, which seemed of a most obstinate nature, as it never became either better or worse, and she sat rolled up in an enormous shawl, with her cap so drawn over the face that Beatrice whispered to Lady Edith, "She was a perfect Mrs. Gamp in attending our patient till now, being visible

occasionally, but to-day we appear to have got Mrs. Harris, who was never seen at all!"

Once, when Lady Edith entered Sir Allan's room, the nurse, with an apron thrown over head, was fast asleep after the fatigues of her night-watch, and the next time on that day she was so occupied in mixing medicines and in preparing poultices, that she could not be spoken to.

That night Sir Allan had an alarming relapse into low feverishness. His pulse sunk away till it seemed almost imperceptible, and became so rapid that it could not be counted. Dr. Campbell was astonished and completely perplexed. He had ordered wine, brandy, meat twice a-day, rest, quietness, and several cordial restoratives, all which had been till this day most efficacious, but suddenly Sir Allan was in as sinking a state as if he had ceased to take the remedies at all, and as if he had met with some great mental shock. It was most unaccountable, and all hope must soon be extinct if the young Chief did not make a wonderful rally. Even Lady Edith's courage sunk, and, unable any longer to control her grief, or to hold up her aged head under such a weight of sorrow, she allowed Beatrice to lead her away from the room, where night and day she had watched so long, that for a few hours, at least, she might try to rest her utterly exhausted frame.

Beatrice remained anxiously beside her benefactress, endeavouring to soothe her agitated spirits by every device of affectionate ingenuity, and Lady Edith had been for some time immoveable with her

eyes closed, when Beatrice fancied that in the deep stillness around her, she heard a low murmuring noise, as if it proceeded from Sir Allan's bed-room. At first she thought it was the wind moaning down the chimney, but the sound was too even and low. Still she thought it impossible for any conversation to be going on, as no one had been allowed to sit up with Sir Allan but the sick-nurse, who promised that not a fly should stir in the room; yet Beatrice listened intently, and became convinced that a voice was audible there, as if some one were in a low, dreamy, indistinct tone reading aloud. She cautiously rose from her seat and proceeded on tip-toe to the door. It was no mistake. In the silence of midnight, a voice proceeded from that room, low, and solemn, and continuous. Could it be Allan delirious? Yet the sound was so very monotonous that it seemed very unlike the ravings of fever. No! the voice was not Allan's!

Noiselessly and cautiously, as if she trod upon egg-shells, Beatrice advanced along the passage, and extinguishing her light, groped forwards in the dark. She followed the sound, pushed the door imperceptibly open, and discovered the room brilliantly illuminated with six large wax-candles surrounding a stucco image of the Virgin Mary. Sir Allan was supported upon his knees in bed by Mrs. Lorraine, and Father Eustace stood holding up an ebony cross for him to kiss. The exhausted sufferer seemed evidently much more dead than alive, and there was the wandering light of

delirium in his burning eyes. Beside the bed lay Mrs. Lorraine's bead-remembrancer, and a number of legal looking parchments, with pens and ink which had evidently been used a few minutes before, as the signatures were not yet dry. While she stood there panic-struck, Sir Allan asked in a fainting voice, "Does the doctor order me no wine to-day? I feel sinking so rapidly."

"No," replied Mrs. Lorraine. "His instructions are that you keep the season of fasting as a faithful son of our Church."

The patient looked both surprised and disappointed, but made no reply, and Beatrice, who knew how earnestly the doctor had enjoined wine or even brandy, listened in silent horror to this lie so coolly told for the good of the Popish Church.

Beatrice, when she first saw Mrs. Lorraine, had with difficulty restrained a scream of consternation, and now remained for a moment so thunderstruck that she neither moved nor spoke. The next moment she fled along the passage, making not so much noise as a mouse would have done, to summon Lady Edith. Much she dreaded to awaken her aged benefactress when so agitating a scene was before her; but well did Beatrice know that the cause was one in which Lady Edith would lay down her life without regret, if Allan might only be rescued.

In an instant Lady Edith comprehended rather than guessed that the sick-nurse from Inverness had accepted a bribe from Mrs. Lorraine to let her own place be assumed by herself, that inde-

fatigable masquerader in the Jesuit school, and that she, taking advantage of the position thus established, might probably have opened an entrance at the well-barred door for the priest. He once beside Sir Allan, could not be afterwards ejected without some such scene in words or deeds as, around the sick-bed of her exhausted invalid, would cause his instant death. Lady Edith, her whole spirit on fire with indignation, but her steps tottering with age and fatigue, instantly called up all her servants, at the same time cautioning them, and especially M^cRonald, on no account to act without her especial orders.

"What shall I do?" she whispered hurriedly to Beatrice. "Think for me—act for me! I am completely bewildered!"

"From what I overheard," said Beatrice, "Allan had made a scruple of receiving the Holy Sacrament at present, and Father Eustace was urging him to receive *une communion blanche*, a blank communion, which the Papists give in such cases, without consecrating the Host at all."

There was within Sir Allan's room a small apartment, leading to a narrow back stair. In that room, to prevent all effluvia from the medicines, every bottle had been placed.

When Lady Edith, leaning on Beatrice, and followed closely by M^cRonald, opened the bedroom door, they saw that the patient having fainted, Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine had both hurried to the dressing-room in search of restoratives, and were hastening back. In an instant, with the

speed of thought, Beatrice flew forward to the dressing-room door, and locked it. Not a second had elapsed, and both the Papal intruders were prisoners. It mattered not now that they almost battered down the door in their vain efforts to return, for the noise of a cannon could not have disturbed the still, cold form of Sir Allan, insensible on the bed.

M^cRonald having received his directions from Lady Edith at once proceeded up the back stair, followed by the gardener, both armed, and the old soldier, livid as death with the effort he made to control his passions, walked deliberately up to Father Eustace, exhibiting an aspect so determined, that few could have had courage to withstand it, and certainly not Father Eustace. It was evident that force would be used if quieter means did not prevail, yet the priest had much at stake, and he hesitated, while a thousand guilty, as well as self-interested fears, rushed into his mind; but his hesitation could not last above a minute when he saw the fierce resolution expressed in every feature of M^cRonald's soldier-like countenance. Father Eustace retreated,—not a word was spoken on either side, but in a few minutes he and Mrs. Lorraine had emerged together into the midnight darkness of the garden, and were both locked out by a careful sentinel, not again to be deceived or surprised, who muttered indignantly to himself, "They should both be indicted for stealing into a dwelling-house."

Lady Edith, meanwhile, had found in a place

of concealment the wine, brandy, and food which Sir Allan was supposed to have taken during the previous day, when he was, in fact, superstitiously keeping the strictest fast of Friday, as instigated by Mrs. Lorraine, and the consequences now were mournfully evident, as Lady Edith, when she placed her hand on his heart, could not discover the slightest pulsation. Still some warmth remained; therefore she sat silently down by the side of Sir Allan, and taking up a tea-spoon, put some brandy between his motionless lips. This Lady Edith continued perseveringly to do for nearly an hour, till at length the patient heaved a low, almost inaudible sigh, then a nearly imperceptible pulsation might be observed at the heart, and his eyes feebly opened.

Beatrice meanwhile advanced to inspect those suspicious looking parchments scattered on the table, which were, as she expected, documents by which Sir Allan legally resigned all his estates, moveables, and property of whatever description, into the hands of certain trustees whom he named, entirely cardinals and priests, to receive the same for the benefit of their Church. Some of the signatures were not yet perfectly dry, which Beatrice hurriedly beckoned up three of the maids to observe, and that the deeds were dated a week back, as if they had been signed early in the morning of Sir Allan's birth-day. A long list of witnesses was also appended, including Lord Eaglescain's butler, gardener, coachman, and grooms, as testifying to this extraordinary document, which they

had never even seen. Beatrice felt a strong impulse to burn these fraudulent deeds, but conscious that this would be both imprudent and wrong, she again enjoined the maids to observe how many of those imaginary signatures, scarcely dry, were written but a minute before in the absence of the parties, and then carefully locked it up.

From that hour Lady Edith, in dumb anxiety, sat immoveable by the bed-side of Sir Allan, carefully excluding even the light of day, and often at night allowing the fire to burn itself silently out, chilled as she felt, rather than hazard disturbing her precious patient by a single sound. For the most devoted assiduity she felt more than rewarded at last by a faint smile from Sir Allan, and a low feeble word of thankfulness. No one except Dr. Campbell and her own servants entered on any pretext, to watch the almost imperceptible progress which Sir Allan was supposed to be making, and hour after hour Lady Edith remained, with no companion but her own pious thoughts, and no support for her almost desponding mind, but those promises of the Gospel with which her memory was amply stored, and which appeared to her so distinct that they needed no interpreter.

Lady Edith now experienced all the advantage of an intimate acquaintance from childhood with the Divine Oracles, for she could repeat to herself with never-ending delight, whole chapters full of encouragement and hope. Much as she loved



human sympathy and now enjoyed its consolations, yet she found a still greater relief in opening her whole mind to her Creator, conscious that there is no impediment between the voice of a suffering mortal and a pitying Saviour, except in that rebellious human heart which will not accept a pardon on the terms offered, without money and without price, as a free and generous gift.

Weeks passed on, and Sir Allan had regained a considerable degree of bodily strength. His tall, commanding figure, his intelligent expression, his whole aspect in the prime of youthful grace, were restored to apparent health, yet a deep depression seemed to weigh heavily on his mind. He was unable for conversation, but there was a solemn depth of thought in his eye, when he occasionally looked up, which Lady Edith felt to be very impressive, though she did not attempt to intrude within the curtain thrown over his thoughts, unless he should lift it by speaking out. Dr. Campbell observed that every attempt to converse brought on an accession of the pulse, and his repeated injunctions to silence were most conscientiously obeyed by Lady Edith, who devoutly considered it the special will of Divine Providence that Sir Allan should be withdrawn for a time from all external influences, and thrown upon a solitary review of himself.

One day, Lady Edith heard her patient repeating over, in an under tone, some of his favourite poems, and when at length he came to the beautiful lament for Lord Douglas, which he had often

formerly repeated to her, she heard him say in accents of mournful self-reproach, and with a deeply-speaking expression of countenance—

“Baffled nature hangs dejected by,
And hails the shade of Allan with a sigh.”

“Surely you are better to-day?” said Lady Edith, laying a kind hand on his arm. “Let me have you conveyed to the window, that you may inhale the fragrance of that lily of the valley and mignonette.”

“Aunt Edith, my worthless body may recover,” replied Sir Allan, in a low tone of depression, “but my torn and shattered mind is a wreck never to be restored. It is said that the most enduring, though the sharpest of all earthly evils, is sorrow for the dead, and I wish you had that to suffer for me, rather than all the affliction I have caused your kind heart.”

“My very dear Allan, why sit down to be regularly miserable? why not look for a rainbow in your cloud?” answered Lady Edith in a tone of remonstrating cheerfulness. “The excess of grief has its own strange attraction, and even despair itself becomes a state of mind that people are unwilling, after long habit, to leave off. I would not needlessly jar at present against any feelings that have become dear to you, and therefore I dare not now speak to you with my former ease; still you know of old, Allan, that I consider it a religious duty to be happy. In your case, I can see no sufficient warrant for being miserable, but you are

in that morbid state which delights in a perfect luxury of woe. My dear Allan, you must consent to be made happy again. Let me set a trap to catch a sunbeam for my dear old pupil."

Sir Allan took Lady Edith's extended hand in his own, with the saddest, but the kindest of smiles, and said in a low, melancholy, thoughtful voice, "I seem once to have lived in a paradise on earth, where dear Aunt Edith acted as my guardian. Since then, times have altered, and I have altered, but oh, how dear to my heart is the memory of those hours! I did not deserve such happiness, and I never can be happy again."

"No one ever merited happiness, Allan,—not the best and wisest human being who ever adorned the earth; but still there is for you yet, if you will only look upon it, a radiant horizon of hope and of consolation. Do not let yourself be so fascinated by looking into the deep gulf of human misery, that you cannot look up to the bright prospect of human pardon and felicity. A few weeks of mental rest—perhaps, Allan, a few weeks of our agreeable society, may do wonders. Cheerful thoughts and kind old friends are Dr. Edith Tremorne's best prescriptions now."

The beautifully modulated voice of Lady Edith, low and tremulous with emotion, was full of the deepest tenderness, and of the most heartfelt joy, at observing how much her words appeared to soothe Sir Allan's agitated nerves, and before much more time had elapsed, many of the past delusions of his mind seemed to him like a con-

fused and painful dream. Every moment of life became inestimably precious to him, as the representative of a vast eternity; but at the same time, the mere fopperies of religion had shrivelled into their native insignificance, before the strong light of calm reason and deliberate reflection.

"What boundless gratitude I owe to the early instructions of Mr. Herbert!" said Sir Allan one day. "Oh, that I could enjoy one hour of his conversation now! That would, perhaps, make me feel young once more. That would bring the verdure and freshness of boyhood to my heart again. That would clear off all the cobwebs and thistle-down with which my poor brain has been clogged."

"Dear Allan," said Lady Edith mournfully, "our revered Bishop is now at the end of his bright and useful course. That good and faithful servant of God cannot survive many weeks, and his peaceful state of readiness is truly enviable. Dr. Campbell tells me that the Bishop is entirely confined to bed now, with no hope of his ever being able to leave it again. He has a heart complaint, and an entire break up of the constitution."

Sir Allan covered his face with his hands in very solemn emotion, but made no reply, though he continued evidently in deep thought during some hours. In the evening he had, for the first time, remained up to tea, and though unable from weakness to take any part in the conversation, his eye followed with more than usual interest all that was

said by the three ladies, and especially by Lady Anne, who looked, in her chastened and pensive loveliness now, like the name given her by Sir Allan during their first acquaintance; "the white rose of Stratharden." The young Chief, as he gazed at the pure and chastened loveliness of her beautiful countenance, repeated to himself these lines:—

"I have play'd the coward,
And, in the sloth of false humility,
Cast by the pearl I dared not to deserve.
How laggard I must seem to her, if she love me!
'Tis not too late."

The evening twilight streamed into Lady Edith's sitting-room, diffusing its gorgeous hues on every surrounding object, and all nature looked in a state of prosperous felicity, when a chariot unexpectedly drove past the window at which the party were sitting, and stopped at the garden-gate. Lady Edith, never doubting that this was an invasion from Eaglescairn, felt satisfied that McRonald would be quite sufficiently peremptory in excluding strangers; therefore, not an anxious thought crossed her mind on the subject till the door of her drawing-room slowly opened, and she saw several persons advancing.

McRonald's whole countenance was flushed and excited with joyful surprise when he entered, supporting on his arm the venerable Bishop of Inverness, his hair white as snow, his form attenuated to a perfect skeleton, his step feeble and tremulous, but his eye bright with a look of

intellectual benevolence. There was a solemn composure in the aged prelate's aspect ; but there was the stamp of death on every emaciated feature of his countenance, as he languidly advanced towards Sir Allan. Breathing with difficulty, the Bishop appeared for some time unable to speak, while agitation as well as infirmity combined to render him silent.

The Bishop being placed on a corner of the sofa next to Sir Allan, held out his thin white hand with a look of dignified affection to his old pupil, who grasped it in his own with affectionate fervour, but turned away to hide the livid grief in his countenance and the tears that fell drop by drop on his faded cheek. At length the aged Bishop found voice to say, in a whisper broken with emotion, "I have risen from my death-bed, Allan, to see you once more. The hourly miracle of human life is soon to end for me ; but, as you know, the blessing of an old man, even if we differ, can bring no one any harm, and I bring you mine."

A solemn pause ensued, while the Bishop became evidently engaged in prayer. He then raised his eyes with mournful kindness to the face of Allan, at which he earnestly gazed, and laying his hand impressively on the arm of his much-loved pupil, he continued with quivering lips and in an accent of the profoundest emotion. His fine old head now reminded Lady Edith of Goethe's, "a grand cupola lighted from below :"

"I see you thus, Allan," he said, "and yet my heart does not break ! Years have passed since we

met, but only days or hours can intervene now till we part,—perhaps for ever! I nightly pitch my moving tent a day's march nearer home. Allan McAlpine, the words I now speak are among the last my voice is ever to utter on earth. At the call of duty I came here, hoping yet, perhaps, to deliver from ruin my long-loved parish, my long-loved congregation, and my long-loved pupil. Seeing the grave open at my feet, I have wished that my dying prayers be uttered here. The first consecrated voice which ever taught you, Allan, the worth of your soul, may possibly be listened to now, as an expiring testimony to Scripture truth, before the tomb closes darkly between you and me."

Lady Edith, Lady Anne, and Beatrice, sat as immoveable as if turned into marble, while Sir Allan raised himself from the pillow to listen more earnestly, and the venerable Bishop with difficulty continued,—“You have been most unexpectedly placed in this house by what seems the special intervention of Providence. Here, in the cool depths of a calm retreat from all dangerous excitements and from all the bewildering heats of controversy, you have lived in darkness and solitude alone with God. I trust, Allan, that you have felt the comfort of a direct access to His throne of mercy. I feel as sure as that I live, breathe, and speak, and must soon cease to do so, that the privilege of private prayer is granted to each individual man; for our Lord came personally upon the earth to testify, by

His holy companionship with men, that it is to himself face to face, without any intervention, that we are permitted to appeal. The Apostles, when asked by the jailor at Philippi, 'What must I do to be saved?' did not say, 'Come to us as priests and confess.' They did not sell him an indulgence, nor desire him to pray to the Virgin and saints. No, their simple direction was, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"Go on," said Sir Allan, in an earnest, though feeble tone, "your voice is very dear to me. It seems like the echo of happier days.

" ' Old love, old fancies,
Buried for years, leap from their tombs, and proffer
Their magic service to my new-born spirit.' "

"Nothing in nature is so extraordinary to me as the dislike men have to ask their own pardon of their own Saviour. Let us suppose an illustration of such conduct. For instance, my very dear pupil, I have travelled far to-day for this meeting, and you must be aware that I would cut off my right hand, or put out my right eye to benefit you. Suppose that now, instead of frankly making me any request, you turned away from me and whispered aside to Lady Edith or to Mrs. Clinton, both my much esteemed friends, that you wished they would intercede with me to grant you a special favour; might I not naturally say, 'Why employ another? Why not believe that, coming to serve you, I am ready to do so? Why ask any intervention, when my whole mission here is,

with one only desire to prove that there is nothing within the compass of my power which, if you ask it from myself, shall be denied?' Can any woman who ever was canonized, be as able or as willing to protect us as our own divine Master?

“ ‘Though now ascended up on high,
Christ bends on earth a brother's eye;
In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of sorrows had a part.
With boldness, therefore, at the throne,
Let us make all our sorrows known,
And ask the aids of heavenly power,
To help us in the evil hour.’ ”

These lines were repeated by the Bishop of Inverness with a depth of fervour never to be exceeded, and his aged voice shook with emotion. The venerable man appeared almost to see that which is invisible, and required no tangible image of wood or stucco to bring before his bright benignant eye the vision of Him, whose form and whose words, engraven on his heart, were never for an hour forgotten in his best affections. The Bishop of Inverness needed no external genuflections or crossings to express the fervour of his devotion; but while his languid body remained still as a corpse, his eye shone with intellectual devotion as he added, in a voice of intense solemnity—

“ Soon, very soon, I shall be in the immediate presence of a hitherto invisible Saviour. Soon my home shall be where most of those I ever loved have long ago preceded me, and nightly I return thanks for every friend safely departed in

the faith and fear of God. In old age we sleep little, but those long hours of darkness are added to my time for preparation, and I meditate on that closely impending hour, when the grave, as little to be feared as my bed, shall receive this worn out body till the resurrection. 'Tis the great birth-right of mankind to die.' If my attached friends and congregation were to divide every bone of my remains as relics amongst them, placing my forefinger with a glass-case over it, in the church of Clanmarina, and my arm in the cathedral of Inverness, how much would I prefer the privilege of Scripture, 'dust to dust!'"

"Yes, the remains of Joseph were carried from Egypt, not to be worshipped, but buried," said Lady Edith, "and my last request would be like that of Shakspeare, that none shall 'move my bones.'

" ' You will not let the mob, when I lie dead,
Make me a show—
Pull out my hair—pluck off my finger-nails—
Wear scraps of me for charms and amulets,
As if I were a mummy, or a drug?
As they have done to others.'—*Saints' Tragedy.*

"Life often reminds me," said Lady Edith, "of people wading in the sea. At first, like a group of playful children on the shore, we scarcely wet our feet in the sparkling foam, and laughingly watch the successive waves as they roll and break against the firm beach on which we stand. Gradually the water becomes deeper, and our progress grows more heavy. The waves become threaten-

ing, the billows rise, and many of those who set out with us disappear beneath the tide. Still the survivors advance into deeper and deeper water, the waves overwhelming them, till the elder pilgrims, like you and I, Bishop, stand in the front rank, about to sink, yet exhorting those behind to persevere and follow."

"Yes," replied the aged prelate impressively, "I must ever be ready to welcome the very bitterest dregs of that cup which my heavenly Father has wisely prepared for me. I am waiting most willingly and most cheerfully to drain the very last drop now; but I cannot accuse myself of ever having voluntarily taken on myself any avoidable sufferings. I have been always as obediently ready to accept the pleasures of this pleasant world as its evils, knowing that God's will appoints both in their proper measure. It is a part of my religion to be happy and to make others so."

"True," answered Lady Edith. "If a skilful physician prescribed for our health two medicines, one sweet and one acid, we should not fulfil our duty of obedience by doubling the last and leaving out the first."

" 'He who made the stream of time,
Wafts thee down to weal or woe.' "

"I often accept it as one of the clearest evidences afforded us of an intelligent God watching over his own world, that not an individual escapes being disciplined by the acutest sufferings of life. Not

one human being is ever for a single hour perfectly happy; but we are bound to await the will of God, receiving our appointed share of good or evil with equal submission. I desire neither pleasure nor suffering unless it be intended for me, and soon I shall be raised 'above the reach of human pain — above the flight of human joy.'” The venerable prelate, with an expression of pleasing seriousness, then looked towards heaven, and solemnly added, “There have been griefs in my lot to be mourned while life or memory remain. The last and greatest, Allan, will be, if my favourite pupil and my former parish be alienated by a vile conspiracy from real Christianity, and led to adopt a false imitation of it.”

Day after day passed on, during which the Bishop of Inverness gained strength, and Sir Allan most gladly took advantage of so favourable an opportunity to renew those old times which he had never ceased to remember with delight. Every morning saw him strolling before breakfast, his countenance full of new life, his eye sparkling with intellectual light, beside his venerated old friend in the garden. Every day they spent some hours in the library together, where the good and learned Bishop discussed, one by one, every point on which Sir Allan had been misled, turning from volume to volume for confirmation of what he said with a readiness only to be exhibited by the profoundest of scholars.

The Bishop thus proved that Christianity at its fountain had been in the early ages pure as

crystal; how in subsequent years; wood, hay, and stubble had defiled the stream; and how eventually at the Reformation the original river separated in two,—the one half going towards Rome, polluted by a thousand abominations; and the other half, being constantly filtered through Scripture, came forth in England clear, bright, and wholesome, fit for the enjoyment of every mortal, without money or price.

The first time that Sir Allan was able to reach the garden he strolled with Lady Anne and Beatrice to a summer-house, gorgeous with roses and jessamine, the birds singing themselves hoarse, and the gentle breeze that fanned the convalescent invalid came laden with the perfume of wall-flowers and of mignonette. Lord Iona, who made his personal inquiries for Sir Allan every day, had joined the party, and greatly enlivened it; but the conversation at length took a graver turn, when the Bishop of Inverness appeared, slowly advancing with Lady Edith, who gladly took her place in the cheerful circle of her young guests. They had all continued in animated conversation for some time, when Sir Allan at length said in a tone of pleasing sensibility,—“There are moments in life which compensate for years of suffering, and there are remembrances dear to the heart that neither time nor distance can obscure. Your voice, my first and best of instructors, has, like a flash of lightning in the dark, recalled to me a vision of my past self—my free and happy boyhood.”

“You gratify an old friend, Allan, and a very

true one," answered the Bishop, kindly. "I have greatly feared—I need not now say what ——"

"Then fear no more!" interrupted Allan, with unusual vivacity, "Heatherbrae has been to Father Eustace the Moscow of all his conquests. How a solemn impression of all I have escaped seems burned into my very soul! It will last for ever. Such as I am now, death at my latest hour shall find me—a true and heartfelt Protestant. That enlightened faith shall hereafter direct my prayers, my thoughts, my affections, my hopes, my very dreams. In health or sickness, in solitude or society, on sea or land, in life or death, my faith is unalterable. Once more then, my dear Bishop, let me take my old place in church, and also be received at the Holy Communion."

"In approaching the altar, Allan, a Protestant communicant is answerable for his own intention only, but in the Romish Church all depends on the intention of the priest. Through him alone grace on all occasions is supposed to be conveyed. The so called infallible Council of Trent has decreed, that however properly the form of administration may be gone through, that whole ceremony is null and void unless the officiating priest intended to administer it.—'Whoever shall affirm that when ministers perform and confer a Sacrament it is not necessary that they should have at least the intention of doing what the Church does, let him be accursed.'"

"It seems to me as puzzling as mesmerism, free-masonry, or mathematics. Do these words

mean," asked Mrs. Clinton, who had now joined the party, "that if the priest does not intend what he appears to do, he becomes a non-conductor between the Christian worshipper and his Creator? Do the Papists suppose that a sinner may be prostrate, soul, body, and spirit, before his Maker, in an agony of penitence, or in a glow of grateful devotion; but that the officiating priest being absent in mind, or careless in spirit, such prayers never can reach the Throne of Grace?"

"So it is decreed by the Council of Trent, the chief authority in all Popish questions," answered the Bishop. "No Romanist therefore can ever be certain that he has really received a single Sacrament of any kind in the whole course of his life. Had the priest who baptized you a right intention? and when the priest who baptized you was himself consecrated by a bishop, had that bishop the right intention? If not, the priest's orders are not valid. He is not then, in the opinion of Papists, an actual priest. The popish Missal says,—'If any one has before him eleven wafers, and intends to consecrate only ten, not determining which ten he intends; in these cases he does not consecrate (that is, any of them), because the intention is required.'"

"Then," said Mrs. Clinton, "where is that secure and peaceful refuge to be found, from all uncertainty and doubt, which is promised by the Popish Church? Among Papists, more than in any other Church, the succession of bishops from the Apostolic days must be a broken chain, because who can tell what were the intentions of

those in subsequent ages who consecrated them? If Lord Eaglescraig had been obliged to prove that when his predecessor died it was the late lord's intention and wish that he should succeed, no lawyer would undertake the case."

Lady Edith privately thought that there could not have been a better illustration, as the last words of Lord Eaglescraig had so evidently shown that his intention was very contrary to what actually occurred in the case of the present peer being his successor.

"In the Protestant Church," continued the Bishop, "we have only one Mediator, but in the Popish there is one in every pulpit arrogating to himself a Divine mission between God and man, to claim which no mortal that ever breathed can become entitled."

"I remember your saying long since what I never forgot," said Allan, "that you and many other Protestant clergymen dread above all things any additional power given to the clergy, as it has often made them the greatest of tyrants."

"Most true," said the Bishop meditatively; "those who have the misfortune to fall under priestly domination may often feel inclined to say, like David, 'Let me fall into the hands of God rather than of man.' A desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall, and the Popish priests arrogate to themselves a power never bestowed on mortal man, to decide what souls shall be saved or lost. They thus assume an elective franchise, to which they can show no title. It is

not by the vote of such self-constituted electors that men are to attain a place in eternity, as he who brings the suffrages of all mankind may nevertheless be rejected. Those whom the priests hold up to the world as models of every Popish perfection may no less find mournful cause one day to exclaim, 'Cursed is he of whom all men speak well.' "

"I remember last year," observed Lady Edith, "seeing the funeral of a young man who had been so selfish, and so utterly spoiled by his parents, that he literally died a premature old man from dissipation; yet when the coffin was carried out of his old home his mother said,—'My son's body goes now to the dust, but his soul is already in heaven!' Every mortal would wish to canonize his deceased relatives,—it arises often from family pride or love of patronage; but no sanction can be found for doing so, and one can only account for the attempt by considering the natural bias of human nature, which strives so strongly, so fearfully, but so vainly to interfere with the counsels of eternity."

"My lesson is learned now of unquestioning submission to them," said Sir Allan, in a tone of grave decision. "By all I value on earth, and that is still much," he added, with a glance towards Lady Anne, "I shall endeavour to accept my destiny, and to be exactly what my Creator intends;—to live in this country where He appointed me a place, to cherish the friends He has gathered around me, to believe that Christianity consists more in

making others and myself happy than miserable, and cultivating health of mind and body, to live energetically devoted to the good of man, and to the glory of God."

"Then may a blessing rest for time and eternity on your active efforts! You have a very wide field of influence," said the Bishop, pointing to the beautiful village and the scattered dwelling-houses on the bright and distant landscape; "therefore teach all your dependents, from your own happy example, how best to play for life's tremendous stake."

"It is one that I had very nearly been cheated of," replied Sir Allan, gravely, "but now I may say in the words of L'Estrange,—‘He that loses anything and gets wisdom by it, is a gainer by the loss.’"

"True," answered the Bishop; "and now, my dear old pupil—

" 'It rests with you, whether the priest be honour'd;
It rests with you, whether those fields grow corn;
It rests with you, whether those toiling peasants
Lift to their masters free and loyal eyes,
Or crawl, like jaded hacks, to welcome graves:
It rests with you—and will rest.'"—*Saints' Tragedy.*

CHAPTER XI.

" Yes ! I must headlong into seas of toil,
Leap forth from self, and spend my soul on others.
Mere contemplation palls upon the spirit,
Like the chill silence of an autumn sun ;
While action, like the roaring south-west wind,
Sweeps laden with elixirs, with rich draughts."

Saints' Tragedy.

It had long been proverbially the greatest of intellectual enjoyments to converse with the Bishop of Inverness, for every heart and intellect became enlarged under his influence, though few could fully trace the source from which so much pleasure was derived, as it was more felt than observed. The current of his conversation, abounding with traits of the finest sensibility, and mingled with inexhaustible stores of anecdote and illustration, never seemed too deep for those who were his companions at the moment; while his extensive knowledge, enlivened and illustrated by a vivid imagination, touched brightly on the profoundest subjects, like a moonbeam on the ocean, giving to all he said a sparkling vivacity most attractive and truly delightful.

Lady Edith had been sitting one morning, after Sir Allan had sufficiently recovered to come down

stairs, with her convalescent patient, and the rest of her welcome visitors, enjoying beyond measure a discussion in which they were all engaged, relating to the immense proportion of happiness intended by God for his own world, if it were gratefully received and rightly used, when their attention was suddenly attracted by a distant noise, which seemed to come from the village, as of a rolling sea, or of a raging hurricane.

"The election takes place next week," said Sir Allan; "but as my nomination has been withdrawn by Father Eustace, there is not likely to be any more than common excitement at Clanmarina on that account."

The sound subsided for some moments, and then arose once more, apparently nearer and much louder than before; while Lady Edith listened, wondered, and finally rung for M^cRonald, the explainer-general on all village affairs. The old veteran was unusually long of appearing, and when he did lingeringly enter the room, the ladies were all surprised at his evident unwillingness to answer their inquiries respecting the cause of this extraordinary uproar. M^cRonald evidently knew something which he was resolved not to tell, for his face was flushed to scarlet, and his eyes glittered with a look of fierce delight, so unlike his usual quiet, respectful, subdued expression before his venerable mistress, that Lady Edith if she had not known for many years past that he was a teetotaller, would almost have fancied that there must be whiskey in the case.

McRonald having hurriedly muttered that there were some idle people on the road making a riot, which would soon be over, was hastily withdrawing, when a deeper hum of voices and a louder roar than ever startled the whole party from their seats, while the ladies, really intimidated by its angry sound, flew towards the window.

When Lady Edith anxiously looked out, she saw approaching in the direction of her own house, like a rolling sea, crowds of men, women, and children, all evidently in a state of high excitement. She thought the whole village united could not have produced so numerous a multitude, all armed evidently with scythes, flails, pickaxes, and old rifles, while their voices were united in one exciting chorus of yells, shouts, execrations, and hurras. Meanwhile the leaders in front grasped hold of one individual whom they seemed to drag unwillingly along, while he struggled to escape, and at every such attempt, in which he was overpowered, fresh shouts followed of vehement execrations and of angry laughter. Lady Edith in agitated astonishment looked round at McRonald for an explanation, but he continued inexplicably happy and silent. His eyes were expressive of the greatest delight, and though he began an unfinished sentence by saying, "I am very sorry, my lady," yet Lady Edith began to suspect he was hurrying off to join the fray, as he had almost disappeared out of the door already, when in an imperative voice that must be obeyed, she called him instantly back, saying,—

“McRonald! I see you know more about this affair than you choose to acknowledge. I insist on your explaining what is the cause of that extraordinary riot.” It seemed as if Lady Edith might as well have spoken to the Falls of Niagara, and expected an answer. McRonald, as silent as a catacomb, busied himself about the room, and was evidently making towards the door to effect his escape, when Lady Edith imperatively called him back, saying to the evidently disappointed old soldier that he must not stir till the riot was over.

“You see, my lady,” replied McRonald, gazing out of the window with all the eagerness of a schoolboy detained from his cricket-field, “that foreign priest, Father Eustace, seems to have a motto of his own, that honesty is only the best policy, if there be no easier way to gain your ends. Old Farmer Carre died this morning, and the monks have produced a parchment in which he leaves every sixpence to them. We, in Scotland, call such legacies ‘a mortification to the Church,’ but it is also a very great mortification to his relatives, as his own sons are left penniless. This news has gone all round the village. As a natural consequence, my lady, the people have all risen in that hive-like uproar, and are going to——”

“Stay, McRonald! Where are you hurrying?” asked Lady Edith, looking as McRonald afterwards said through and through him, till he felt as if nailed to the wall. “What are they about to do?”

“To duck him in the salmon-pool, my lady. He has not a feather left to fly with, and they are

carrying the parchment before him as a banner mounted on that flag-staff," answered McRonald, his old eyes gleaming with pleasure. "You see, my lady, there! Every man of the village carries a paper round his hat, with the words written on it, 'No Popery!' The Romish chapel was pulled down this morning, the pews torn up, and all the pictures and images burned in a bonfire."

"McRonald!" exclaimed Lady Edith, indignantly, "why did you not tell me all this sooner?"

"I was afraid your ladyship might not approve."

"Approve! of course not;" said Lady Edith, rising. "It is a lawless mob! The poor Clanmarina villagers must be brought to their senses, or there may be bloodshed."

"Not a drop, my lady! Just as I feared," muttered the old soldier. "Her ladyship will spoil all, but I hope it is too late now to rescue Father Eustace. He deserves the worst that can befall him, and more. Lady Edith would spare even that man's feelings and fears."

"I trust," asked Lady Edith, "that Robert Carre has not been irritated into joining in this outrage?"

"No, my lady; he exhorted his neighbours to let the law take its course, and he would be righted either now or in a better world," said McRonald in a low voice of the deepest sympathy. "Poor Robert! his arms, that used to be like bars of iron, are hanging by his side to-day in helpless sorrow. The old place of Daisybank is very dear to him, and his father's memory. My own poor

Bessie too, for he still loves her! It is a sad wreck, my lady, and you cannot wonder if we all feel for him."

McRonald roughly passed his hand across his eyes and turned away to hide his emotion, then hurrying to the door, he said, "I'll just step out, my lady, to see what is the upshot."

Some mill-stones are very easily seen through, and Lady Edith plainly perceived where the warmest sympathies of McRonald were hastening; and that he was now in the state of one of his own soda-water bottles, wired down, but on the point of exploding. A louder shout than ever now resounded from the crowd, all in a delirium of excitement. An Irish mob is like straw, easily set on fire, and as easily extinguished; but Scottish rioters, like wooden faggots, are slow to light, yet burn far more fiercely when once roused to a flame. Long had the anti-papal feeling smouldered at Clanmarina, while the honest villagers saw their own Chief seduced into forsaking his high position, their long-loved pastor, Mr. Clinton, carried off from his once happy home, and poor Bessie kidnapped into a convent; but now, since old Carre of Daisybank, the stoutest Protestant in Clanmarina, had been, as they said, "bamboozled on his death-bed into disinheriting his own dutiful son," the cup of Father Eustace's crimes seemed full to overflowing, and Justice herself had no scales in which to measure the weight of his guilt.

McRonald had been always a good hater, and though this noisy act of unruly vengeance was not

quite according to the disciplined habits of an old soldier, yet detesting the perverter of his own Bessie with the whole intensity of his excitable nature, McRonald would gladly have been a ring-leader in the riot if he dared disobey the known opinions of Lady Edith. He would have died a martyr at the stake, to see all the many schemes of Father Eustace frustrated; and as the mob, like a rolling sea, came roaring and yelling onwards, he could restrain his eagerness no longer, but waving his highland bonnet in the air, he welcomed their tumultuous approach with a shout of encouragement, such as he had given when leading on his followers to the forlorn hope at Bergen-op-Zoom.

A loud hoarse hurrah from the mob had welcomed his appearance, and McRonald was about once more to cheer them on, with his most vehement sympathy, when a hand was laid on his arm, and looking impatiently round, he beheld the pale and anxious countenance of Lady Edith, her lip quivering with agitation, but her eye expressive of gentle command, as she said in low earnest accents, "McRonald! you must stop those madmen, or they will lay up for themselves a lifetime of repentance. There is death in their faces, and they will murder that man! Can it be possible that I saw you encouraging them? Go now,—stand in the middle of the road and ask the foremost to stop. You see the ringleaders are all McAlpines from Clanmarina, and they will attend to you."

Never did the old soldier obey any order so

unwillingly. He would have stood at the command of Lady Edith in the way of an express train, or a menagerie of wild beasts broke loose; but to impede the clansmen in venting on Father Eustace one relentless and unmitigated discharge of their long-delayed vengeance was a very severe test of his obedience. Still the aged warrior's habitual respect for Lady Edith rose superior to all the pleasant excitement of punishing a culprit, whom with his whole soul he abhorred, and discipline prevailed over natural impulse. Touching his cap respectfully, though, truth to say, somewhat sulkily to Lady Edith, he made one or two commanding strides across the road, and placing himself like a colossal giant before the front rank of the fiercely excited mob, he called on them in a military accent to halt.

The people paused in astonishment, while the loud, gruff, angry sound of their voices became for an instant hushed; but the momentary lull was soon over. The mob seemed about to proceed with renewed vigour, again uttering fierce cries and menaces; but when they became convinced that the old soldier was trying in earnest to stem the torrent, Andrew Carre shouted to him angrily,—

“Have they called out the military, and brought you, M^cRonald, rank and file, to disperse us? Clear off there! M^cRonald, I never expected to see you side with the Papists. You might as well attempt to lay all this dust on the road with a single water-cart as to stop us now. I

thought you were of the right sort, and quite a brick!"

"If I were a brick, I would throw myself at your head!" replied the old soldier gruffly endeavouring to hide his own real feelings, and half angry at a jest of Andrew's on his being commander-in-chief of the forces at Clanmarina; "stand at ease there!"

"I may stand back," replied Andrew, sulkily, "but I'll never stand at ease while my good old uncle's property is taken from his own son. Who is safe now, if Carre of Daisybank, who lived and died the best of Protestants, is to be buried as a Papist? No, M^cRonald! you may stand there making all the signs of the zodiac to stop us, but I'll never believe your heart is with the Papists that carried your own Bessie away."

M^cRonald stopped his unwilling pantomime of signals to allay the mob, and pretended he had done his utmost as a peacemaker, when Lady Edith herself, at length alarmed at the increasing tumult, pale and agitated, opened the little gate of her garden, and stood silently before the clansmen of M^cAlpine. In an instant the fierce clamour gave way to a feeling of reverential awe; the storm of hisses and execrations was heard no more; and every cap was respectfully lifted, as their aged benefactress appeared. Tears glittered in Lady Edith's eyes, when she beckoned up to her Andrew and Duncan Carre, nephews of the recently deceased farmer, who carried his suppositious will as a banner floating aloft over their heads, and said,

in an earnest tone of touching appeal, while they looked at her with a half-awkward and half-defying expression,—

“ You have had great provocation, but do not now put yourselves frightfully in the wrong, Andrew and Duncan. Do not madly take justice into your own hands. You may, perhaps, do in a moment now deeds which, through time and eternity, you will both repent ! I feel most deeply for you, and for your excellent cousin Robert, but the laws of God and man must not be broken. Trust to them for justice——”

“ Yes, yes !” replied Andrew, in a voice and with a look that evidently meant “ no.” He then added, in a tone of remorseful respect, “ I wish your ladyship were, for once, a worse adviser. We know you are right, but we wish on this occasion to do wrong. We can dare and die in such a cause as this, but we cannot now be stopped. That man deserves all he can suffer.”

An angry groan from the crowd at this momentary delay was followed by a louder shout than ever. It was evident that more instantaneous justice than any laws could sanction was now to be exacted by the excited mob ; for some were exchanging hurried sentences in an under tone, and an hundred eyes were fixed in one unrelenting gaze on Father Eustace, who hung his head, so that no one could tell what that long-disciplined face expressed of anger or fear. To stop the mob now seemed as hopeless an attempt as that of the Sicilians, when they coax Mount Etna to abstain

from an eruption; for the villagers' faces clouded darkly and ominously still, and M^cRonald turned to Lady Edith, saying,—

“Your ladyship might as well endeavour to put out a fire by drawing up buckets from a waterless well. They will not be checked, and they cannot be; it is like trying to put a lid on the top of Mount Vesuvius!”

The noisy clamorous cavalcade was about to proceed in its furious progress, when Lady Edith turned to those nearest her, saying, in a voice of piercing anxiety,—“Have I lived among you so many years in vain? Will none of you listen to one whose only wish is for your good? Think what Sir Evan would have said!”

Several of the clan M^cAlpine, after a moment's hesitation, disengaging themselves from the roaring whirlpool, respectfully advanced, cap in hand, towards the gate, and stood as if awaiting Lady Edith's orders; but others hesitated; when suddenly Robert Carre, pale as a spectre, hurried through the crowd, and calling on them not to stir, said in a tone of deep feeling to Lady Edith,—

“We ought to have but one wish amongst us, Madam, now—but one—to obey our best of friends. Lady Edith Tremorne, in Clanmarina, might speak the savageness out of a mad dog. Let no friend of mine oppose what she desires.”

“But,” replied his cousin Andrew, “is this man to get off with impunity, after committing a death-bed robbery? It is a crime unknown and undreamed of by any of us till this hour! May

every shilling he gets by Daisybank blister his fingers, and blister his conscience for ever. To rob a church is bad, but to rob for the church is very little better."

The mob had become impatient to proceed in their wild career, when at this moment the Bishop and Sir Allan, to whom Lady Edith had sent an intimation of the impending danger, were seen slowly advancing together. When the crowd, who had believed their long-loved pastor to be far distant on his bed of death, saw him now, as if risen from the grave, and the young Chief whom they had suspected to be again at Eaglescairn, now standing among his old Protestant friends, a sudden burst of rapturous emotion from the whole concourse rent the skies. Many rushed through the gate to welcome their venerated Bishop; numbers in succession grasped his hand, and all united in another and another shout of obstreperous delight, echoing, and re echoing to the very hills, for Sir Allan, the Protestant Chief of M^cAlpine.

All that could have been said in a scene of such tumultuous joy, was for several minutes useless or unintelligible, while the Bishop feebly supported himself on Sir Allan's arm, his white hair streaming in the wind, his pale countenance like that of a corpse, his eye full of melancholy calmness, but his whole expression dignified with intellect and benevolence. After pausing for some moments to ascertain that there was silence, he said, in a voice of habitual authority, yet of the most parental kindness,—

“My dear friends, little did I expect that in this world we should ever meet again! My own course on earth is ended, and standing, as I do, on the very edge of the grave, it seems to me strange now that anything in existence can cause so much angry excitement as I see among all my old friends at this moment. Life appears to me already a dream, and only death a reality. Think how short is the interval that divides the dust we are from the dust we shall be! Do not, then, prepare a pang for your last hours by doing violence in this case. Release that prisoner, whom you have no right to retain, and trust to God that in this life, or in a far better life, justice will be done by One who cannot err, and who knows all.”

The fine solemn voice of the Bishop was dear to the memory of all present. It fell like snow-flakes now on the burning anger of the excited mob, which became dumb and motionless, while their deeply-honoured Bishop, with increasing feebleness of body, but undiminished energy of purpose, continued:—

“Religious differences, my old friends, are much too solemn to become the subject of angry strife, or of animal force. Let us pity those we consider wrong, but never persecute them. I invite your prisoner to take a safe shelter within this garden. Let him enter in peace, Lady Edith, here; your best of friends desires it also: therefore, let not one of you attempt to impede him, but each return quietly to his own home, and take my fervent blessing—my last blessing with you!”

The shouting multitude of Clanmarina had become tranquil, as they gazed on the time-worn countenance of their long-loved Bishop, so pale, and so worn. As the glow which had been brought to his cheek by exertion subsided into a ghastly paleness, their voices and their hearts became blended into one universal expression of simple kindness, and of intense emotion. They observed with deep interest, too, how tremulous was his voice, how tottering his step, how feeble his whole aspect; and yet how true and how earnest was the attachment with which their old friend and pastor gazed, probably for the last time, on those who had so long been his flock. The mob, after a time, felt that their love and obedience could be best shown by quietly dispersing; and they gradually melted away, it would be difficult to say how; but M^cRonald, indignant to see the culprit about to escape unscathed, indignantly muttered to himself,—“The clan is no better now than a stale bottle of soda water, when the cork is out. I never thought to see so much good anger thrown away! They might at least have made him promise to leave the neighbourhood. But I forget; no promise to heretics would be binding.”

Father Eustace, looking very meek and crest-fallen, was released from the grasp of his assailants, when he made no hesitation in obeying the welcome summons of the Bishop to take refuge in Lady Edith's garden from the obstreperous and dangerous escort which had surrounded him, and who were now expending their wrath by burning

an immense Guy Fawkes in the centre of Clan-marina.

The priest, having been hospitably invited to partake of some refreshment in the house, remained at Heatherbrae till it was safe to go home, and had his soiled dress re-arranged by a most unwilling valet, in the person of M^cRonald. Father Eustace was disappointed, however, to find that, by the orders of Lady Edith, he was conducted into a sitting-room alone, as none of the party felt bound to associate with one whom they so utterly despised. Being now in a state of bodily safety, however, any affront fell as powerless on Father Eustace as the sword of Richard on the pillow of Saladin. He stood for some moments with his eyes fixed on the ground, while his cheek was still lividly pale, and said to M^cRonald when ushered into a room, in accents of angry contempt,—

“For the sake of those idiots themselves, I am glad to be safe. The mob was becoming formidable, but one fool makes many, and it is my duty to forgive and forget.”

“You will do neither, or you are no Jesuit,” muttered M^cRonald between his teeth; “there is no anger so vindictive as that of a priest; but I am not to be humbugged. We did but act in self-defence; yet, as he is our enemy, he will always think that we are his, and behave accordingly. If malice can reach any of us, we shall soon feel its power.”

Before leaving Heatherbrae, Father Eustace

sent a slip of paper to Sir Allan, requesting a private interview ; and the young Chief, feeling himself braced up in mind and body for the worst, determined to see Father Eustace, and at once put an end to all hope of his being again deluded into the dreamy and imaginative state to which his mind had been so long and almost mysteriously enslaved. It was a singular meeting, when Sir Allan entered, for the cunning Jesuit at once took it for granted that he again met an obedient and devoted proselyte. Stealing at Sir Allan a searching glance full of purpose, (and who would not have quailed beneath that eye so indicative of power?) he began to speak with sly contemptuous pity of the heretic mob which had attacked him, as well as of the heretic Bishop who had released him.

Assuming his "fatherly" tone, and rolling his eyes with a look of affected piety, the wily priest proceeded to regret that Sir Allan had been unavoidably associated during his illness with persons so totally unsuited to his enlightened state of mind ; but observed, that any gratitude to such persons was by no means required, as, on the contrary, whatever might naturally have been his own personal feelings, it was now his duty to sacrifice them.

"Self-denial and holy obedience require that you leave this house with me to-day. Humility calls for this surrender of your comfort, your convenience, and even the safety, if it be so, of your health ; I, as your spiritual guide, command that, however hateful or revolting to your natural feel-

ings, you bid these heretics a hasty farewell, or no farewell at all would be better, and immediately accompany me to Eaglescairn."

"Father Eustace," replied Sir Allan, in a tone of deep-seated emotion, yet of manly energy, "it seems to me as if, within these few weeks of solitary thought, scales had fallen from my eyes. I have been almost miraculously preserved from the final renunciation of all God's gifts,—my property, my feelings, and my whole freedom of thought or action. A spell was over my soul, which is broken. I look back at myself as a recovered lunatic might be supposed to recal the delusions of his cell, and see that the vows I was about to take would have made me your slave for life, body and soul. If you, a mortal man like myself, and of the same fallen sinful nature, had ordered me to commit the greatest of crimes, I should have been allowed no choice, whether it were to commit a treason against my sovereign, or the meanest villainy against my neighbour, such as cheating an old man on his death-bed, or decoying an innocent girl from the protection of her domestic home to a dungeon, or heartlessly leaving my kind friends here without any thanks for their care."

Father Eustace listened in a perfect stupefaction of rage, but he preserved his usual corpse-like attitude, his feet and hands together, and his eyes on the ground, looking exceedingly like a lay figure, while Sir Allan, with increasing energy, hurried on, saying,—

“ Before you relieve me of your presence, let me fully explain how my soul revolted long since from the degradation of mind and heart to which my uncle subjected me at College, when his sleepless eye was on me, and his continual discipline, like the incessant dropping of water that wears away the hardest adamant. You know how he made me swear, as a test of holy obedience, to be a tale-bearer, and repeat whatever my companions said which could criminate them. He offered me an indulgence for my own faults, provided I could criminate others. In truth, a common informer is not so bad as you and he would have made me, for it is not those who trust a common informer that he betrays. For months my uncle did not even allow me at any hour of the night or day to shut my own door and be alone. Others were spies on me, as I was desired to be on them. In case one might be confidential with another, we were obliged to go always in a party of three, that there might invariably be one traitor present. I abhor and despise myself, that a Highland chief and British gentleman could be so degraded ! No Turkish slave was ever more considered his master’s property than I was my uncle’s, who has long pulled the wires of an obedient puppet ; but now, I solemnly take upon myself the position in life that God has evidently appointed for me, to enjoy all its privileges, and to do all its duties. I have been set on the road to happiness, and the fault is my own hereafter if I do not pursue it, zealously and well, without slavishly obeying that super-

stition which would have taught me to worship more deities, lesser and greater than the Lares and Penates of Pagan mythology."

"Do you forget, Sir Allan," asked Father Eustace, in his blindest of tones, "that the Council of Trent passed a decree in favour of Saint-worship, enjoining us to instruct our flocks respecting the invocation of saints, the honour due to relics, and the lawful use of images? That decree declares that those who say it is foolish to supplicate the saints reigning in heaven, entertain impious sentiments."

"Father Eustace," replied Sir Allan, "I have often been told that the agony of becoming sober after intoxication is so great, that it might cure any one of drinking; and, truly, my own return now to my sober senses, after being in a Popish delirium, so fills me with shame for my past folly, that it will prevent all danger of a relapse. I do not now believe that any human saints reign over our earth, nor acknowledge any but those recorded in Scripture. No mortal beings hear our prayers, nor does real religion consist in visiting those tombs where their bones are indiscriminately decaying to ashes. None were permitted to know where Moses was buried, to prevent, probably, all extraordinary reverence being paid to his remains; but you and my uncle tried to persuade me that when the coffin of a saint is opened, it emits a delicious fragrance, and that a fleshless skull has even announced its own name, its former residence, and all the circumstances of its decease. No,

Father Eustace, from such a religion of dead men's bones and all manner of uncleanness, I am now and for ever emancipated. The lasso was dexterously thrown over my neck, but the captive is free again! Many thinking Christians believe that a time of persecution is again to arise in England, when no man may call his life his own; but should your frightful adulteration of Christianity become supreme in Britain,—should the reading of Holy Scripture become a capital offence, and our glorious land become once more devastated with superstition, I shall be found ready to contend for liberty of conscience, and the worship of an only Saviour. In such a cause, who might not welcome a martyr's grave, and a martyr's crown? In the words of Addison's hymn,—

“‘Not in mine innocence I trust,
I bow before thee in the dust,
But in my Saviour's blood alone,
I look for mercy at thy throne.’”

CHAPTER XII.

"Who serves the Master of the Pope is wise,
Who serves the Pope 's a fool."

BEFORE the Bishop of Inverness retired, worn with his exertions of body and mind, to bed, he joined Lady Edith's cheerful tea-table, where in a high state of comfort Lord Iona had as usual made his way good, and who exercised his uncommon power of making amusement and pleasure, where ordinary minds would have seen only sadness and sorrow. Before his gay sunshine of mind, dulness passed away like a summer shadow, and all the party, except the heart-broken Mrs. Clinton, felt the frost of depression melting away like a Russian winter. For her there remained only "the dull deep pain, and constant anguish of patience."

"What nerve you ladies displayed this morning during the riot!" said Sir Allan, turning to Lady Anne; "I am usually a total disbeliever in hysterics, but you treated us to not so much as a fainting-fit, a smelling-bottle, or even a mere glass of iced water!"

"We shall postpone such scenes till you require some excitement, Sir Allan. I knew a lady once, who always fainted at the head of her own dinner-table when the conversation flagged, and her exit

in a state of insensibility was of immense use in dispelling ennui, as well as in giving people something to talk about."

"It must have been a troublesome manœuvre for the husband, who would be obliged to carry her out. I hope my wife in such a case may not weigh above nine stone five or six."

"I rather pique myself on having discovered a mental alchemy for myself, that turns the base metal of discontent and weariness into the bright gold of gaiety and happiness," said Lord Iona in his wonted tone of most attractive good-humour; "my plan is the reverse of Father Eustace's, who turns the gold into dross. Every generous feeling, every noble sentiment, every independent action, he would put into his own crucible, to be debased into slavery and wretchedness."

"It is strange," said Lady Edith, "that though parents watch the first symptoms of fever in those children they love, no precautions are taken against the earliest tendencies or the gradual increase of the Popish fever in our families, when every English home is now besieged by it, and when the dereliction of any one member is worse than his death. How much recent misery might have been spared had such a guard been kept over those who ought to be watched with affectionate influence!"

"It is a wonder," said Lord Iona, looking very misanthropical, "that the whole civilized world has not risen *en masse*, to banish the Jesuits from every community, as the common enemies of virtue and mankind. Better to be in the chariot of

Mark Anthony drawn by tigers, than to drag on life deprived of liberty, virtue, and intellect, beggared in fortune, and denuded of every earthly attachment. I learn daily more and more the inestimable value of affections founded on esteem, and on entire confidence," added Lord Iona, with an earnest glance towards Beatrice, who coloured deeply, as she met his eye gleaming with animation and sensibility, while the fervent tone in which he spoke rung a peal of pleasure in her ears as he continued in an undertoned whisper to herself, "Pray, Miss Farinelli, is love such as mine a thing you believe in at all?"

"Perhaps I do," replied Beatrice, with a yet brighter scarlet on her cheek.

"It is impossible you should not," answered Lord Iona; "if you did not love me, I should hate myself. Every law that ever treated on reciprocity, commands you to believe in and to reciprocate my long trial—at least for several weeks—attachment. You know, Miss Farinelli, the old fairy tale says, that souls are all made in pairs, and carried down to the earth in balloons which break on touching the ground. The two wander apart in misery till they are reunited, which very seldom happens in this wide world. You and I had very nearly missed each other, and the result would have been most calamitous to both, but now 'all's well that ends well.'"

"Not so fast," replied Beatrice in a low undertone; "I have heard that which makes it not impossible for me one day to be happy, but till the

good news is confirmed, I dare not promise myself, nor any one else, ever to see me otherwise than I am. There are at present you know, as I consider, impediments——”

“ Pshaw !” exclaimed Lord Iona with good-humoured petulance, “ the impediments are all your own invention; you made all the giants, and you must positively kill them for yourself, as I cannot even see them. You like giving up your own will, in your own way, but let me hope you may not be obstinately cruel now, for I really cannot stand it. All the unwelcome things you said to me formerly, are now like the mist of a half-forgotten dream ; but my heart has always cherished one bright undying hope of future felicity, and there can be no happiness to me without you. I grasp at any straws, therefore, that will preserve me from the deep waters of despair.”

The cheek of Beatrice flushed deeply, and her eyes betrayed a tremor of sensibility, for she felt this a strange crisis in her existence, when the love that had remained so long unspoken, might perhaps now be, for the first time, fully acknowledged. She feared to say too much or too little, and sat in unutterable felicity, but in a degree of fluttering embarrassment which scarcely dimmed the perfection of her happiness, while Lord Iona, encouraged by her evident emotion, spoke to her again and again in accents of the deepest tenderness and of the most ardent hope. She wished, yet feared to tell him how entirely his devoted love was appreciated, and returned, but felt that

to her the privilege had not yet arrived, as to the Psyche of fabulous times, to unveil her own heart.

"Let me consult an oracle as to my future hopes," said Lord Iona, in a tone of hopeful vivacity, increased by the evident bashfulness of Beatrice, who rose to hurry out of the room in agitated confusion. "Do you remember in the 'Gentlemen of Verona,' when Speed says, 'Will it be a match?' Launcelot answers, 'Ask my dog; if he say "Yes," it will be; if he say "No," it will be; if he shake his tail and say nothing, it will be.' Now here on the rug is your own Shako, ready to give his opinion, and a very favourable one it evidently is. Good Shako! wise dog! Positively I can do nothing from morning till night now but read advertisements addressed 'to persons about to marry!'"

Beatrice blushed, smiled, and hastily vanished, while Lord Iona, full of hope, happiness, and gay anticipations, threw himself on horseback, and galloped to the world's end in a ferment of felicity, for which his horse paid the penalty of being thoroughly knocked up, while the animated rider repeated to himself these lines of an old song:—

"I wad do—what wad I not,
For the sake of somebody."

Lady Edith had been kept long awake by many interesting thoughts, which were at length forming themselves into pleasing dreams, and vanishing again in a more profound slumber, when she

was aroused to the vague consciousness of some unusual commotion in the house. She sat up to listen, and became certain that there was the scuffling sound of many footsteps passing up and down stairs, the suppressed tone of agitated voices, the hasty opening and shutting of doors—all told a tale of some sudden alarm, and under a dizzying sense of apprehension, Lady Edith hurriedly threw on her dressing-gown. With hasty, yet noiseless steps she then followed the sounds that had awakened her, till she found herself in the Bishop's room, where the servants in speechless grief were gathered around him.

The venerable prelate, evidently in the last stage of prostration, was supported up in bed by his own servant, pale with agitation and sorrow; while McRonald was chafing his feet, already cold and insensible. Still his dying eyes beamed with an expression that testified more than words could have done, "Now all is well, and I die in peace!" Though the pallor of death was on his cheek, there appeared the calmness in his whole countenance of a tired child about to sleep. For several minutes he lay, his livid cheek resting on the shoulder of his mournful attendant; but when Sir Allan, pale with grief, hurriedly entered, the aged prelate made an effort that seemed almost supernatural to speak, saying in a tone of mingled humility and confidence, "At last, the hour of my departure is come, my friends. Death is a tremendous necessity. I go, Allan, to that world where error is unknown; it seems to me strange indeed now, long

as I have expected this, that I am actually passing away. I look with a sort of farewell curiosity at everything in this vanishing world. It seems as if I had never observed them before, as if the beautiful sunshine were new to me, and all your faces that I am to behold no more." He paused for several minutes, but the doctor having administered a cordial, the Bishop's strength became wonderfully revived, and his whole heart seemed in his eyes when he again looked at Sir Allan, saying in a tone of overwhelming solemnity, "I have prayed,—oh, how fervently! that my own beloved pupil may be preserved from the snares around his path. Allan, dear Allan, receive this my own Bible, and may it light you, as it has lighted me, along the only safe and sure path through this dark valley, into an unfathomable eternity. Farewell, Allan! My latest earthly care is for you! My voice fails, my sight fails, but not my faith. I have a steady fearless reliance on the written word of God,—and on that only."

The Bishop's breathing became so impeded that for several minutes it was impossible to articulate, but he closed his eyes, and in a voice reduced to the lowest whisper, earnestly repeated several prayers from the Service for the Sick; and when his voice at length ceased, he had fallen into an insensibility from which he recovered no more. His was now the long, deep, unbroken sleep of death. All was over; or rather, to the emancipated soul passed into eternal felicity, all was now begun. The shock was overwhelming to those

who loved that best of men, the Bishop of Inverness; and deep was the respectful sorrow with which together next day his afflicted friends deplored their incalculable loss.

"For when the morning came serene,
And dim with early showers,
His quiet eyelids closed—he had
A happier morn than ours."

There were no frantic bursts of grief, but the assembled circle each mourned in silence awe-struck, though not fear-struck, at this sudden blow. All expressed a fervent hope that they might live as their good Bishop had lived—a Bible-Christian on the best model, and die as he had died, in a simple undoubting faith in one only Saviour and Mediator.

"Truly," observed Lady Edith next day, in a deeply meditative tone, while she gazed out of her window at the clouded mournful sun battling through the heavy fog, "our own Bishop has long been, as it were, an out-door servant of his great Master, exposed to the clouds and storms of an earthly career, but now he is called home into a Father's house, there to find shelter from every blast! No man valued life more than he did, or felt a more solemn awe in laying it down, and his composure was not from fearlessness of death, but from a Protestant belief in the immediate happiness awaiting his redeemed soul at once in a far better world."

"Certainly," observed Lady Anne, "if he had

depended on the intercessions of men and women, born in sin like ourselves, he must inevitably have been tortured by the fearful apprehension of a long-enduring purgatory, perhaps to last for centuries."

"Life is a terrible, but a glorious gift, and I have always felt overawed by its importance," said Lady Edith, meditatively, while Sir Allan's flushed cheek and contracted lip betrayed how deep was the affliction he tried to subdue; "yet how affecting and how consolatory is the sorrow of those we leave behind; how sad it would be to fall like an autumn leaf unnoticed and unlamented! To the old, like myself, and to the dear revered Bishop, all that human friendship can do for us is to shed a tear over our last remains. Allan! when we are both laid at rest in the grave, remember your two old friends, and all we endeavoured to teach you; the generation to which you belonged will then stand forth, in the front rank, where I stand now, awaiting the reaper's hand. May you then be found ready and willing to depart with the same placid intrepidity as our lamented friend and bishop!

"My soul, that fluttering hastens to be free,
Would yet a train of thoughts impart to thee,
But strives in vain; the chilling ice of death
Congeals the blood, and chokes the stream of breath.
Resign'd she quits her comfortless abode,
To course that long unknown eternal road.
O sacred Source of ever-living light!
Conduct the weary wanderer in her flight;
Direct her onward to that peaceful shore,
Where peril, pain, and death prevail no more."—*Falconer.*

CHAPTER XIII.

"How is this,
That thou art here, unlook'd for at this hour?"—BAILLIE.

IN families and neighbourhoods, after a long interregnum of health and prosperity, who does not remember a time when it seems as if a sudden outbreak of sickness and death were about to empty the world of all those they have loved or known, and as if nobody would be left on the earth? So it appeared to the older inhabitants of Clanmarina, when, after following their revered Bishop to his last home, they heard that Lord Eaglescairn was not expected to survive the night.

In a lofty and spacious room hung with tapestry and pictures, and on a bed hung with curtains of the richest velvet, which were thrown widely back for air, lay the dying man, in a state of bodily and mental suffering that his worst enemy, if he had one, might have pitied. No language can describe the ghastly anxiety expressed in his wasted features, as he gazed at Father Eustace, who sat beside him alone, sprinkling his face occasionally with holy water from St. Victore's well, and holding up a blessed chaplet in *articulo mortis*. The

religion of human coinage was here exhibited in all its feebleness and deformity. No mourning relatives were permitted to approach the expiring sufferer,—no sympathising friends; but he had received the last offices of his Church, and nothing was left for him now to do but to die. His pale lips quivered, his mouth was open, his looks wandered from place to place, as if in search of consolation, till at length he turned his face to the wall in speechless anguish, and shunned the eye of Father Eustace, which had been sternly fixed upon him, while he muttered inaudibly Latin prayers for the agonizing, which might as well have been in Chinese or Hindoo, for any appeal they made to the heart or conscience. At length, unable any longer to control his emotions, Lord Eaglescain with sudden strength sat up in bed, gazed anxiously around, as if in search of some one, and then said, in accents of piercing agony, “I cannot die in peace with my secret untold! From the day of that shipwreck, when you persuaded me, for the interests of the Church, to defraud that girl of her inheritance, never has my miserable mind known one moment’s peace. You tell me, like the Duke of Burgundy’s confessor, that you will take upon yourself the punishment due to my crime. That promise seemed very sufficient when I was well; but now!——” Lord Eaglescain covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud with agony and apprehension.

“There is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemn’d
He deals on his own soul.”—*Byron*.

"Remember," said Father Eustace, in a consolatory tone, "you have there a crucifix blessed expressly by the Pope for a happy death."

Lord Eaglescairn raised his livid face, gazed upon it for a moment, in the hands of his confessor, with a look of unutterable woe, then pushed it hurriedly away and buried his face in the pillows.

It was the dead hour of midnight, and all was still. The fire had gone out, the candles burned low in their sockets, and dark were the shadows in every distant corner of that large room in which the confessor and his penitent were alone.

"My son," said Father Eustace, "you know despair is in itself a sin."

"Yet hope must be denied to a being of crime and impenitence like mine," exclaimed the dying man. "Had I relied on my conscience it would not have deceived me, it would never have ceased to reproach me, it would have judged and condemned me; but you put my conscience to sleep, or rather to death, and offered me the use of your own! My sins, during health, were like caged lions that could not reach me till now, but a dying memory lets them loose to-night, like wild beasts in the desert. Yes, my sins have found me out. I must confess all."

"My son," said Father Eustace, assuming a tone of gentle remonstrance, "you have confessed ——"

"No, no, no! I need not confess to you, my accomplice," interrupted Lord Eaglescairn, with a look of dull horror,—“you who were my instigator. There are no disguises in death! Who

can warrant me that your absolution is ratified? —that your bail is accepted? No! Call my son. He already suspects something. He must be told all. He will do justice”——

“Not to-night,” replied Father Eustace, in a tone of authority. “Dr. Cameron ordered you till to-morrow the strictest silence and solitude.”

“To-morrow I shall have the unbroken silence and solitude of the tomb. For me, the next hour that strikes is eternity! The first yawning grave shall be mine. Let my son be summoned now.”

“Impossible. I owe it to my Church and to myself that you do nothing so rash and presumptuous as to act against the advice of your confessor,” replied Father Eustace, observing with imperturbable calmness the frenzy of anguish and despair painted in the wan features of Lord Eaglescairn, now pinched and sharpened by approaching death. “You are excited and nervous. Take this composing draught, and we shall talk over all your desires and fears afterwards.”

“At a more convenient season, which will never come!” muttered Lord Eaglescairn, grasping the bed-clothes with a look of livid despair. “My poor disinherited son, from whom I have alienated all in my power to your Church! What will he think? What can he do? Send him to me now, and torment me no more with your false promises and pretended miracles. Can you still maintain that, by an absolution such as yours, the dark mass of my crimes could become whitewashed like an old house? No! My whole existence of late has

been a lie. I have acted a part too long, but I will act no more. My conscience has been chloroformed, but it is now most fearfully awakened. Send my son instantly. It is no man's affair but my own how I die."

"It is the affair of the Church; and it is my affair that you do not injure her by an unseemly death," said Father Eustace, in a low tone of fierce determination, his whole form expanding with rage, while a gleam of intense wretchedness shot through the features of the dying man. "Do not forfeit the merit of a whole life by nervous terrors now, by open disobedience and disbelief. Let your dying testimony be a crowning effort, so that your family, servants, and tenants, may see an example ——"

"Not an example, but a warning!" exclaimed Lord Eaglescairn, in a voice of deep despair. "Let there be an end, now, of my atrocious deceptions. Have you the audacity to speak of my merit? Alas, alas! conscience is awake now, and will sleep no more throughout a long eternity."

Lord Eaglescairn's voice had become hoarse and low from intense emotion, and he grasped the arm of Father Eustace with a look of desponding anxiety; but there was nothing to hope from the calm stern eye of the priest, who silently held out the sleeping potion, saying,—“Remember, the first of duties is obedience. You are not to judge whether I, who command, am right or wrong, wise or imprudent, holy or imperfect; but I come in the name of our order, and your sole care must

be to obey. You must give up all if you would gain all."

"I cannot sleep. I have not time to sleep," exclaimed the dying man, rejecting the potion with fearful earnestness, "a world of gold for a moment of time! Do not oppress me in the last struggle of nature. The sharp stings of memory are tortures enough now!"

"Then," replied Father Eustace, "listen to these words from the Breviary,—'If the winds of temptation arise, if thou run upon the rocks of tribulation, look to the star, call upon Mary. If, disturbed with the greatness of thy sins, troubled at the defilement of thy conscience, affrighted at the horrors of the judgment, thou beginnest to be swallowed up in the gulf of sadness, the abyss of despair, think upon Mary.'"

The patient now unwillingly received the draught recommended by Father Eustace in his hand, but with a fixed determination not to expend his few remaining moments in sleep. By a sudden gesture he directed the eye of Father Eustace for an instant towards the door, and during that moment secretly poured the whole potion noiselessly on the bed-clothes. He then laid his head back on the pillow, and seemed in a few minutes buried in most profound, almost deathlike repose. Father Eustace lingered for some time, but the low regular breathing of the sufferer convinced him that Dr. Cameron's medicine had taken most marvellous effect; therefore summoning the old sick nurse, who was busy studying the "Visions of St. An-

thony," to take his place, he stole off silently to tell Lady Eaglescain and Lord Iona that the patient still wished for quietness, and that he begged they would retire for the night, as it would relieve his mind to know they were in bed.

Lord Iona had been sound asleep for some time, when he was suddenly awakened by hearing his door slowly open, and the old sick-nurse approaching on tiptoe scratched upon the curtains in Jesuit fashion, to announce her presence. She then made Lord Iona a sign instantly to rise and follow her, which he did with almost trembling haste. The young man perceiving at once that this must be a summons from his father, hurriedly threw on his dressing-gown, and left the tottering old woman far behind, as he rushed anxiously onward to obey the mandate, and entered in almost breathless anxiety lest Lord Eaglescain might be at the point of death. No sooner had Lord Iona entered the room than his father, raising himself with difficulty from the pillow, sat up in bed—made an imperative sign for his son to lock the door, and instantly to seat himself by his side, when in a low gasping voice he whispered,—“Are we safe?”

“Yes!” replied Lord Iona, in a tone of kind encouragement, “as safe as a closed door, and a trusty son can make you, my dear father.”

“Then now for the worst of all penances! To make my own high-minded and honourable son despise and hate me. Oh! that I were at this moment anything but what I am! The time is

short—very short, and there is much to be done! Reach me that box. Here is the key, my own son,—and never part with it while you have life. Your father has been a guilty man. Often, oh! how often have I confessed it to my confessor, but never to any good purpose till now.”

While he spoke Lord Eaglescairn’s strong mind seemed broken down to the weakness of a child, and he wept like a feeble infant. His hands shook with emotion, and trembled with impatience as he unlocked the iron box, and hurriedly taking out a long roll containing several sheets of parchment, he tore off his own signature from the bottom of every page, and burned each separate fragment as he did so at the candle. A smile of ghastly satisfaction gleamed in his eye when it was done, and he whispered to his son,—“You were to have lost all, had you either become a Protestant, or married one. I have long and fervently wished you united to Beatrice Farinelli. It was the only hope remaining that my crime could be repaired—the deepest I have committed, and they are many. Read those papers, and you will know all. It is hard to die, my son, feeling how you must learn to despise my memory ——”

Lord Iona clasped Lord Eaglescairn’s hand in his own, and fervently kissed it, while Lord Eaglescairn, seeing the tears that filled the young man’s eyes, exclaimed, in a low, muffled whisper, “Now let me die. Before those tears are dried, my son, I would hide myself in the grave, from all that you have yet to learn. Blame me as you may, but pity

me too. My life, from that fatal hour of temptation, has been one scene of splendid wretchedness. Many a time I have longed to tell you all the black dishonour of my conduct ; to throw myself on your affection ; but my conscience was in the keeping of another, who absolved me for everything. I have been watched, herded, ruled with a rod of iron, threatened with the terrors of this world and the next."

The dying man sunk back exhausted and hysterical, but keeping Lord Iona's hand clasped in his own, while the father and son gazed on each other, now at the last, with entire confidence and true-hearted affection.

"My son," whispered Lord Eaglescairn in trembling accents ; "when this hour comes to you, as it comes to all, may you be as happy as you now make me. I have long been forced to buttress up an edifice of falsehood,—be it your honourable task to undo my guilty work. Act by your own conscience, not another's, and, if possible, bury my faults in oblivion, though that is a funeral much too honourable for such crimes."

The faint breathing of the sufferer became low and interrupted, but there were no immediate symptoms of dissolution, therefore Lord Iona had quietly taken his place at the bed-side, in hopes his father might fall into a gentle slumber ; when suddenly a heavy hurried step was heard lumbering along the passage ; an attempt was made to open the door, the lock was tried in vain, and Father Eustace, in a voice of imperative authority,

desired that he should be instantly admitted. Lord Iona was about to answer in a very decided negative, when Lord Eaglescairn, starting wide awake at the sound of that voice, raised himself up, looked wildly around with an aspect of fearful earnestness, uttered a low exclamation of horror, his lips moved, but there was no sound, and then sinking back in a fainting-fit, almost instantly expired.

When all was over, and after a few hours had elapsed, Lord Iona knew all. He found in the iron-box a letter to the late Lord Eaglescairn, from his second son, written by Tom De Bathe on his death-bed, at Madrid, to say that his wife, who had been converted to the Protestant faith, was, during his illness, secretly carried away by her Spanish relatives and imprisoned he believed, with their ~~infant~~ daughter, in a convent, where the priests, one of whom was his brother-in-law, were resolved that the little girl should be brought up a Papist. The child's cousin, he said, Theresa Da Hosta, a clever, enterprising, and well-educated woman, now become Protestant herself, had a sister in the convent at Corunna, where his wife was supposed to be unwillingly concealed, and she was furnished with ample funds to seek out the child and its mother. As the unfortunate father had no hope of living above a few days himself, he had desired that if his wife and child were ever rescued, they should proceed instantly to place themselves under the protection of his best of friends, Sir Evan M^c Alpine in Scotland.

It was in pursuance of these directions that Theresa visited her sister in the Convent at Co-

runna, where she ascertained that her late cousin had pined for some months with sorrow, and died under all the penitential austerities inflicted on her by Father Dominick, her brother, and the remaining priests, for having married a heretic. The beautiful child they were then educating to be a most fanatical little Papist, under the assumed name of Beatrice Farinelli; but Theresa having at once recognised her own young favourite, watched without ceasing, whenever she visited sister Angela, her own sister, in the Convent of St. Bridget, until at length, after months or rather long years of hopeful perseverance, she succeeded in obeying the will of the child's father, by carrying off the stolen Beatrice,—stolen from her own father to be kept in cruel and unjust imprisonment. A letter which Theresa had written before embarking, she directed to the child's own grandfather, of whose death she had heard no intelligence in Spain. This packet having been delivered to the recent successor, the new peer read it in company with Father Eustace, and thus learned that a young claimant was about immediately to arrive, and to be placed under the Protestant guardianship of his hated neighbour, Sir Evan M^cAlpine. This was not to be borne, yet it seemed inevitable, and day after day the agitated peer sat with his confessor in deep conclave, to consider the loss about to befall themselves and their Church.

How the shipwreck happened Lord Eaglesclairn never knew,—how the lights on the beacon at Clanmarina became changed that evening, he never conjectured, but so it was, that by an interposition

which Father Eustace assured him was miraculous, a spontaneous fire had appeared on the summit of Cairngorum, when the Spanish vessel hove in sight, and at the same moment the blue light on Clannarina headland as miraculously became extinguished. The twelve judges of England might have sat in judgment on the case with their black caps on, but Father Eustace never looked more composed than during the whole scene that followed ; and at that time he had little difficulty in persuading Lord Eaglescairn that after so supernatural an interposition on his behalf, it would be wicked and presumptuous not to accept so timely a boon, and that, for the child's own sake, she should be rescued from Sir Evan's guardianship, and securely placed in a nunnery, there to take the veil. " Every man has one chance in life," Father Eustace had said, " and, Lord Eaglescairn, this is yours."

The Spanish relatives of Beatrice, who were rich and powerful, believing her to have perished in the wreck, made no subsequent inquiries respecting her ; and as all the machinations of Father Eustace had failed to entrap Beatrice into his power, she had remained personally unknown to Lord Eaglescairn, till their accidental rencontre in the garden. Then the beauty of her countenance and the charm of her manner, had first awakened in him a desire to remove from his own conscience the weight that had long and increasingly tortured him, in thinking of the crime by which he had been led into keeping estates that belonged of right to another. If Beatrice and

Lord Iona were once attached, Lord Eaglescairn felt that to her he could and would confess all. Whether his son became Protestant or not, seemed to the father of little moment, when Lord Iona's mind had been so lately verging to the gulf of infidelity, and when that of Lord Eaglescairn himself was so bewildered with legends, and so startled by the undisguised wickedness of his own confessor, that it was only by a reign of terror Father Eustace still kept over his victim, almost to a dying hour, the iron rule of superstitious awe.

The Popish love of processions is one of those ruling passions strongest even at death ; and now, by Father Eustace's commands, the earthly greatness of Lord Eaglescairn would have been most magnificently heralded to the tomb, had not Lord Iona imperatively forbidden any pompous rites. The emblazoned escutcheons, the sable mutes, the chanting priests, the massy gilt crucifixes, the plumed and stately hearse, and all the solemn splendour of superstitious pride were suppressed : surrounded only by relatives and domestics, and the ceremony consecrated by prayer, and by the silent tears of a dutiful son, within his own private chapel the body of Lord Eaglescairn was restored to its kindred dust, and left to moulder undisturbed in the grave.

“ Shun the insidious arts

That Rome provides, less dreading from her frown

Than from her wily praise, her peaceful gown,

Language and letters ; these though fondly view'd

As humanizing grace, are but parts

And instruments of deadliest servitude.” — *Wordsworth*.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Of Charity, what kin are you to me ?

What countryman ? What name ? What parentage ?"

SHAKESPEARE.

THOSE heathens who believe in a transmigration of souls maintain, that after death, men unfit for heaven are born over and over again in a ceaseless succession of probationary lives, till they become perfect ; but the Christian is conscious that at death the character of each mortal becomes finally stereotyped for eternity. Presumptuous sinners are forbid either for good or evil to pass a final judgment on each other, and it is not by the vote of mere fallible human beings that the place of any one hereafter shall be decided ; yet those who had known the Bishop of Inverness, felt confident that no man could have left this world with a clearer conscience or a humbler hope of pardon in the life to come ; for in him they had witnessed the persevering dedication of all his great energy to the best interests of others. Thus, if a man of sinful human nature could deserve to be canonized, his claim might have been sanctioned by those who knew him ; but, all that the enlightened Christians he left behind could hope was, that he departed a

forgiven sinner, and they rejoiced to believe that he was not now committed to the dungeon-keep of a miserable purgatory, to be bought out only by expensive masses, or by the suppositious interference of imaginary saints. No! prayer could be of no more avail to his departed soul now than moonlight on his grave. The curtain of death had fallen alike over the virtues of Bishop Herbert, and over Lord Eaglescairn's crimes.

"How heartless and wretched I used always to consider the doctrine of purgatory!" observed Sir Allan in conversation with Lady Anne. "But every doctrine of that Church, which we both so narrowly escaped joining, is subversive to all rational happiness in this life, or cheerful hope in a better."

Whenever Sir Allan caught a glimpse of Lady Anne's black draperies among the flowers, he hurried out to join her in the garden, where happiness itself seemed scarcely happy compared with the delight their emancipated minds enjoyed together. It cannot therefore be doubted that Sir Allan's time was most agreeably spent among all the refined, benevolent and devotional occupations of Heatherbrae.

"Hail, sweet society! in crowds unknown,
Though the vain world would claim thee for its own;
Still where thy small and cheerful converse flows,
Be mine to enter, ere the circle close."—*Rogers.*

It has been often observed that a disappointment in love is apt to make a man of quick sensibilities turn his affections to where he believes they will

be more highly estimated, and that the heart sometimes makes a cannon at the rebound, so that the more severe the stroke, the more certainly it goes off at an angle in search of a gentler reception elsewhere. Sir Allan had long perceived that his influence over the affections of Beatrice was at an end; but his pliant nature soon found consolation from the gay vivacity with which Lady Anne welcomed his attentions, and all the hoarded tenderness of his nature became now devoted to her lively fascinations. Between them there had arisen an increased confidence, while often comparing notes on their own wonderful escape from the snares of Romanism, and on the doctrines they had both now abjured.

"That imaginary purgatory is the chief source of revenue to all Popish priests," observed Sir Allan. "My uncle, Father Ambrose, made me, on his buy-and-sell system of religion, pay 5,000*l.* for masses on behalf of my father's departed spirit, and more than double for Sir Evan's."

"I remember an instance of that," replied Lady Anne. "I once in the city of Antwerp wandered up an ascent rising at an angle of about twenty-five degrees, and on each side of the path were portraits and images of saints in perpetual succession. At the summit stood an ill-painted picture, about ten feet high, of our Divine Lord and Saviour, stretched upon the cross. A red wire to represent a stream of blood was made to pierce the canvas, and a cup was held below by the Virgin Mary. Underneath this scene was a representation of

purgatory. I observed there twelve or fourteen heads cut out in oak, which were surrounded by flames that rose in every direction. Over that a text very much misquoted and perverted from Isaiah, was placed, and a box below, of course, to receive money from the terrified spectators on behalf of the artful Romish priests."

"Lady Anne," said Sir Allan with emotion, "no two persons in the wide world have more experience of their machinations than we two. They would have extinguished for us the many sources of happiness with which a liberal Providence has wisely gifted us, but we must disappoint their plans. Let this day be to us the first dawning of a happy futurity. Let me not deny that I do seem somewhat like the man in the moon, who changes every month, and that both in love and religion I have been unsteady. A crushed and blasted heart, such as mine, fickle hitherto as a summer breeze, would be a very inadequate offering to one like you, who should be loved at once and for ever; yet, might we not still save something from the wreck of our youth and hopes? I never more can feel such rapture or such wretchedness as in former days; but might we not yet live for each other, and be happy in the calm sunshine which remains, enjoying a wiser and holier felicity than we ever before promised ourselves?"

Lady Anne listened, smiled, blushed, and let her long eye-lashes droop over her downcast eyes, but she could make no answer, though a torrent

of pleasant feelings rushed tumultuously to her heart. Her transparent cheek, usually pale as alabaster, became tinged with a glowing pink, that deepened into the hue of the pomegranate blossom, and she felt as if at this moment all the troubles of her past life had ended. The change in Lady Anne's whole feelings now was as sudden as a spring in Russia, where the inhabitants retire for the night with deep snow on the ground, and awake with flowers blooming before their eyes.

"To you, Lady Anne, with whom is associated now in my heart whatever on earth is beautiful, happy, or desirable, what a delight it would be if I might hereafter disclose all I have ever felt, thought, dreamed, or suffered!" continued Sir Allan in low earnest accents. "Father Eustace, with his grand inquisitorial aspect, has long guessed and tried to undermine my increasing wish for domestic happiness, but in vain. He says that my estates were once church lands, which ought to be restored to his order, as no family thrives who has ever kept such property. But I could mention quite as many such proprietors who have thriven remarkably well with similar possessions. My endeavours must be to return all I enjoy an hundred fold, by becoming, as Sir Evan was formerly, a steward of all I possess, faithfully devoted to the real good of those around."

"How easily such sweeping assertions are made as that of Father Eustace!" said Lady Anne indignantly. "A friend of mine is fully convinced that no individual ever thrives who has injured him.

He takes no steps to produce this result, but from the moment any one treats him ill, he says to me with perfect confidence, 'Mark that man, for you will see some misfortune happen to him soon;' and true enough, at least twenty times such a result has occurred."

"Exactly! For instance, there is an old antediluvian superstition, that the M^cAlpines must not wear green. It would break the hearts of my clan if they saw me do so. There is no denying that if my purse is green I always lose it; and once, when I ate a green pea, I became ill!"

"Then," answered Lady Anne, laughing, "if it were against the Papal interests for you to wear green, they would persuade you that there was a special judgment on your ever doing so. You must have been in a grass-green coat when you first met Father Eustace!"

"The Highlanders have a superstition, that any one passing a pin on the floor without picking it up, brings down a misfortune on himself; and there are frightful instances told. I suppose the calamity is great in proportion to the size of the pin; but, positively, it is quite tiresome to me when walking with Lady Eaglescairn, for in the midst of our most interesting discussions, when I think her whole attention absorbed in something I am relating, she suddenly dives down, and hurriedly takes one up, laying great stress in her remarks upon whether the head or the point were turned towards her. How morbidly superstitious we do at last make ourselves by cultivating and

promulgating such fancies about either estates or pins."

Long and secretly had Lady Anne, the admired of all admirers, once observed the attachment of Sir Allan to Beatrice, with hopeless sorrow on her own account, as she felt that with the young Chief of M^cAlpine, her greatest felicity in life might have been found. There was a similarity of tastes and of principles between them that seemed almost inevitably to point out how perfectly they might have been suited; and it was the secret consciousness of Sir Allan's previous attachment which had rendered Lady Anne so ready and anxious, like most other recluses, to give up the world, because the world did not bestow on her exactly what she wished. Some persons, with despairing impatience, throw up the cards at once, when not dealt the best hand, while others build and rebuild their castle in a new school of architecture, with ceaseless good-humour and patience. The mere effort brings its own reward. Lady Anne had from the first despaired of ever finding any reciprocal feelings in the object of her long and deeply cherished preference; but she little guessed that when her beautiful rival in Sir Allan's affections had brought him to the unwilling conviction of her own indifference, she had at the same time made an impression on him never to be erased, by the warm terms of panegyric in which she spoke of Lady Anne herself, and by the belief she had more than hinted, that with her he might yet enjoy every refined and rational felicity.

Sir Allan had, in their long continued hourly intercourse at Heatherbrae, learned more and more to estimate the brilliant accomplishments and unaffected gentleness of Lady Anne ; but with his increasing estimate of her attractions, there arose a greater and greater diffidence of himself, so that from day to day he postponed a declaration of his sentiments till now, when with glowing eloquence he proceeded frankly to tell Lady Anne the whole history of his own heart, and the conclusion at which he had at last arrived. "Did your quickness never discover my secret?" asked he. "That unworthy as I am to become the happiest of men ; I should certainly be the most miserable if you rejected me."

"Do you really think so?" said Lady Anne ; at length with pleasurable nervousness, an arch pretty smile quivering round her mouth, and dimpling her crimson cheek, "I have a great mind to try how wretched you could be made for life, if I accepted you."

"Then pray do, and the sooner you begin to be my torment the better. We must marry in haste, that we may have plenty of leisure to repent! You know happiness cannot begin too soon, and we must determine that ours shall be perfect. I could attempt any impossibilities now. I am ready to mount the breach of a forlorn hope, or to accept any utterly desperate wager ; but I cannot long endure a hopeless love."

"Perhaps," said Lady Anne, colouring deeply and smiling, "your love is not hopeless. Now

that Father Eustace has melted away like an evil spirit when the conjuration is over, we may think and feel as we please."

"Dear Lady Anne," exclaimed Sir Allan, rightly interpreting her agitated manner, "language has not words to express the delight,—or if ecstasy be a more expressive word, the ecstasy of this moment. In the folly of my joy I feel almost inclined to declare that you are a thousand times beyond perfection,—an assemblage of every excellence under the sun, and a great many more."

"I do not quite agree with the last speaker, but the longer you think so the better; and I am quite willing to be convinced, as well as to think as favourably of you in return."

"Then the reciprocity is not all on one side," said Sir Allan, with such a smile of pleasure in his eyes as had not lighted them up since his boyhood. "We can read each other's hearts, and measure our happiness or grief by the degree in which our affections are united in the enjoyments of this life and in the hopes belonging to another and a better. There is no use in my promising to love you, for I cannot help doing so. I am at present quite giddy with standing on the highest pinnacle of happiness. It must be a pleasure to the sun itself being allowed to shine on two such happy people."

"Yes," replied Lady Anne, smiling, "ours will not be a happy valley, but Cairngorum must leave off his clouds and become a mountain of sunshine and happiness."

"It has done so already! My gloomy old towers shall ring again with echoes of human happiness and sounds of grateful devotion. Their Protestant master shall become a model husband, when united by the dearest link in the chain of human sympathies with his model wife. Believing as I do that there is but one in the world who could make me happy, and that by the greatest good fortune I have secured her, may we not hope that our lives shall be adorned by much of the real poetry of life, and even by a little of its romance, though, at the same time, built of the most durable materials?"

"There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are link'd in one heav'nly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die."—*Moore.*

"Ten years hence, I shall inquire whether your opinion is still the same, and if so, then I shall begin to be vain," said Lady Anne, striking away a piece of gravel with the point of her parasol. "Yet, Sir Allan, can you and I ever dream of happiness again, after all we have both suffered?"

"Of course we can! I wish all the world were as happy as you and I at this moment! I feel now as if every castle in the air of my former life were becoming realized in solid stone and lime. All that I ask or expect is perfect felicity for the rest of our lives. With me you shall not be able to help feeling happy: I shall hate myself if I cannot make you so. The dark hour of life has passed away from us, and the daylight has dawned.

It was truly said that the post of honour is a private station well supported ; and such a home as ours shall be a scene of well regulated enjoyment.

“ ‘ Oh to be thus and thus day after day,
To sleep and wake, now find it yet a dream ! ’ ”

“ I hope we shall not find the assertion true, that life is at first all poetry and at last all prose,” said Lady Anne, smiling ; “ but I remember hearing the beautiful Lady Porchester say of herself lately, ‘ I began life with being considered a perfect fairy, and now I end it looking like a perfect witch.’ How will you stand such a change as that in me, for I cannot promise not to grow old and ugly soon,—perhaps even peevish and cross.”

“ Well, I would rather be miserable with you than happy with any one else. You will not be so bad, I hope, as Lady Porchester, who beats her Abigail when she is irritated. She was heard lately praising herself as a perfect pattern of conjugal excellence, and ended by saying, ‘ Long as Porchester and I have been married, I never yet struck him ! ’ ”

“ Well, you do not promise yourself too much, I see,” replied Lady Anne, with a look of comic humour. “ My faults, and they are many, shall become in your partial eyes like the spots on ermine-fur, the greatest embellishments. We must have a flight of happiness quite beyond the reach of ordinary wings.”

“ Now that I am to “ stand prostrate ” at your feet for life, let us have something more than common to boast of,” said Sir Allan, breaking into a

smile. "We must have a perfect flitch-of-bacon honeymoon; and we must show the world that, having been rescued from a life of deathlike solitude and insane austerities, we can, without any Popish caricature of religion, serve God faithfully, while energetically doing the work of this world, and gratefully enjoying its pleasures, in all the homely simplicity of domestic happiness."

"Apropos of nuns, monks, and solitary cells," exclaimed Lady Anne, eagerly; "it is most unaccountable that for weeks I have watched the tiresome postman in vain, expecting he would bring me a letter from sister Agnes—*ci-devant* Miss Turton. No doubt she would give the ears off her head—the only possession she has left herself—to un-sister-Agnes herself again; but I have written to her incessantly, begging to know if she is endurably comfortable, and got no answer. Can she have changed her mind?"

"You wished to know, I suppose, how Miss Turton prospered, like those who are shivering on the first step of a bathing-machine, and ask those who preceded them if they do not find it cold," replied Sir Allan. "But you know her letters and yours must all be inspected. Miss Turton is now, in every sense but the breath of life, dead. Every tie being relinquished, she must speak even of your long-tried friendship as passed for ever away: 'I had a friend once: I had wealth; I had books;' but now she cannot even have a drawer or box with a key to it. There must be no obstacle to that system of complete *espionnage*

which might put a detective policeman to shame. I know all, for I have experienced it all."

"Still, I should not like that any harm happened to my poor, deceased, well-meaning idiot of a governess," exclaimed Lady Anne, with a look of good-humoured, pretty wilfulness. "We agreed that if she died, a lock of her poor, dear, iron-grey hair should be sent to me. They cannot, surely, have shut up Miss Turton as insane? Odd and absurd as she was, it cannot possibly be come to that! How well I remember that dreadful lunatic cell, the door of which my governess and I laughingly passed some few weeks ago! Really, Sir Allan, though not usually fanciful, I shall be unable to banish from my imagination the picture of that unfortunate Miss Turton, locked up in her solitary cell, tearing her hair—or rather with none to tear, for they shaved her head."

"Have you not often watched a jockey breaking in a horse?" asked Sir Allan, gravely. "It is done by making the animal go round, and round, and round the same weary circle, till he is broken in to mechanical, unthinking obedience. If he be a fine, high-spirited animal, he is merely condemned to take a few more rounds, and a few severer lashes, but the result is invariably similar. The high-mettled racer, or the dull, plodding hack, are equally broke in to be ridden or driven, as their masters please. So it was with me. My guardian uncle, availing himself of his legal and relative authority, threw the lasso over my neck, and from that day, life's dull round went invariably on without sleep, food, or liberty, while at a

first I had not the power, and at last not the will to rebel. Thus '*le souffle des hommes éteint ce que le souffle de Dieu a ranimé.*' "

"And you, worthy man, thinking no evil, could not be persuaded to believe in any evil intentions against yourself," added Lady Anne, archly. "I am afraid the next time Father Eustace meets me, now that the fetters he had prepared for us both are shivered to atoms, he will say like Hamlet, 'If thou dost marry, I'll give thee the plague for thy dowry!' Perhaps I may be the greatest plague in life to you."

"I shall take my chance of that, Anne," continued Sir Allan, fervently. "I consider love such as ours the most glorious gift remaining amidst the wreck of human happiness. Father Eustace would have persuaded us that this world's affections are only a snare and a delusion; but we shall consecrate them by a life of diligent and enlightened piety, in which love shall be second to devotion. There are finger-posts enough on the path of life to direct us aright, if we do not prefer going on in darkness, and if we do not break our heads against them."

"Allan, with you for a companion, the whole road of life before me seems drenched in sunshine, and strewn with flowers," replied Lady Anne, in a low tone of emotion. "I was blighted by a night-wind, but now the morning sun shines on me, and I am restored."

" 'Though fortune frown, or falser priest betray,
How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
Should all be changed, to find thee faithful still.' "

“Wear this ring, then, for my sake, Anne: it is the old ring of betrothment in our Highland clan. The diamond is not more pure than my love, nor the gold more lasting and unchangeable. It has been a pledge of wedded felicity to many a successive generation in the house of M^cAlpine, but never graced the finger of one more deservedly loved than yourself. Give me mutual affection in a cheerful home, and whether that home be a cottage or a palace, if the affection be true and lasting, we need ask of Providence no better earthly blessing.”

There are moments of felicity which none can paint, and which few ever enjoy. Such were the hours that followed while Sir Allan traced back with Lady Anne the happy years of his own boyhood, the pleasant days they had enjoyed together on the Continent; and they could even look, though with a sigh of humiliation, on the progress of their perversion to a degrading and miserable superstition—a most unhappy caricature of Christianity—followed by the dawning of that light in the mind of both which had at length restored them to reason and to rational piety.

“I mean to be very ambitious for you,” said Lady Anne one day, in reply to a remark of Sir Allan’s on the happiness of quiet country life; “you must fill the old family seat in Parliament, to support Protestant principle, and keep the Irish brigade of papists from casting the balance on every question. We want more stirring Scottish members, and you shall be one to attend every

division. I already have a clairvoyante glimpse of you, Sir Allan, returning thanks next week on the hustings for a triumphant return, and hear the scraps of your speech almost drowned in tumultuous applause: 'Accustomed to public speaking—deeply flattered—highly delighted—cheap bread—cheap everything—no taxes—Highland home—prosperous tenantry—resident landlord—scenes of my boyhood—no popery—liberty of conscience;'—but, by the way, it is those who talk most of liberty and equality that are invariably the most arbitrary."

"Yes," replied Sir Allan, "if you want the most despotic master on earth to his very few servants, search for the greatest democrat, and you will always find him a petty tyrant. When you hear a papist now, he talks loud and long of religious toleration, though his own imperative duty is to persecute, even to death itself. If I go into Parliament, Anne, it shall be with one object, supreme over all others, to resist the growing influence of Romanists in England. They are all subjects of the pope, only bound to obey our laws in so far as he allows them to do so, and would upset our institutions and government, if they could, as well as all our domestic happiness. Bitter indeed has been the experience of many in this house on that point. Never, except from necessity, has Rome allowed a Protestant to reign in any country; and now, it is only because her power is gone, but not because her will consents, that Pius the Ninth refrains from tyrannizing in this coun-

try, as Gregory the Seventh did once, and so many of his successors, in the zenith of papal authority."

"It is impossible to legislate over men's thoughts and belief in religion any more than over their dreams," observed Lady Anne; "but you and I know now, Sir Allan, from personal experience, what is the code of morals and what are the actions inculcated on the votaries of Rome, and how total an end there would be, under her jurisdiction, to the safety of life and property which every one has so long enjoyed in Scotland."

"True," replied Sir Allan; "look at the denunciations from the altar in Ireland, and the murders that follow. Surely any priest who denounces a man by name from the altar, should be made answerable, if that leads to his being shot over a hedge next day. To constitute in the Romish Church assassination, it is necessary that the deed should be done, as it were professionally, by a hireling employed under contract for the express purpose. The true Italian school of morality is now about to raise its head in Great Britain, as an organized system, acknowledging a different ruler, different laws, and different penalties from ours, and seeking to divide men from their wives and children, their sons and brothers, their parents, and even their sovereign. With Jesuits such as Father Eustace, the want of natural affection is a virtue; and all their ideas of duty are comprised in blind obedience to an Italian priest. You and I, Anne, were both nearly ensnared; but I feel now that those who value the existence of British

institutions, of moral worth, of natural conscience, of human virtue and of human feelings, must unite in Parliament as one man in resisting this onset of Jesuitism in England ; or, like a tower undermined, our noble country may seem strong and stately as ever, till her unforeseen downfall involve the inhabitants in one common ruin. May a good Providence watch over us, better than we can watch over ourselves, and avert the shipwreck of our liberty and of our happy homes !—such homes as you and I, Anne, have learned how to value.”

Lord Iona, in the meanwhile, lost not a day in requesting an interview with Lady Edith ; he could not trust himself to address Beatrice, feeling, with a delicacy worthy of himself, that a change had taken place in their relative circumstances which forbade him to take advantage of their mutual attachment, until she knew all—until she was fully informed how unjustly his father had withheld from her the estates which were her due, and that he was himself only the bearer of an empty title : it was a title now degraded in his own eyes by crimes for which his honourable mind could see no excuse ; and in hurriedly taking every necessary step to undo that guilty work, his feeling of high-minded sorrow on account of his father’s degradation obliterated every other pang of regret, with which Lord Iona might have prepared to resign the inheritance which had hitherto seemed inalienably to await him. Beatrice longed to tell her generous-hearted lover, how little she could value any succession which he did not share ; and that he who had been

so ready to raise her, when portionless and unknown, to his own high position, must now receive from her all that he had been so ready to bestow ; but the subject involving as it did a confession of her own long-cherished attachment, and an allusion to his father's long-concealed crime, she felt a shrinking delicacy in even entering his presence alone, or in approaching subjects so strangely interesting as those in which they were both now so deeply concerned.

Not a single concealment from Lady Edith was made by Lord Iona, now Lord Eaglescairn, who brought every paper that related in the most distant degree to Beatrice ; so that very soon it became evident that every legal proof could be established of her claim to the extensive family estates, and to the old Scottish title of Baroness Clanmarina.

The first step toward asserting her rights, taken by Lady Edith, with the advice and assistance of Lord Iona, was to obtain a legal warrant for the release of Theresa Da Hosta, from her long and dreary imprisonment, in the Convent of St. Ignatia, to which they at once proceeded together, accompanied by Lady Anne, who wished to avail herself of this pretext and opportunity, to inquire for the newly professed nun, " Sister Agnes."

Accompanied by the Sheriff, Lady Edith and her party, without giving any warning, at once arrived before the gloomy gates, and being mistaken for purchasers come to inspect the bazaar of fancy-work, always kept open by the nuns, they were at once admitted without questions asked.

Great was the change of countenance which took place on the features of the Lady Abbess, *ci-devant* Mrs. Lorraine, who opened her eyes wider than she had ever opened them before, when she perceived who they were who had thus gained such easy access within her presence, and it required all Mrs. Lorraine's practised effrontery calmly to inquire, as she did at length, for what purpose this visit was paid. When Lady Edith's explanation had been given, she at once denied the existence of any such person as her visitors described, and positively maintained that no such individual had ever entered the establishment—that the whole story was an entire, a most a bsurd, and most unaccountable mistake.

The Sheriff, having briefly explained now his own authoritative position, informed Mrs. Lorraine that if her captive were not immediately produced, he had placed a posse of constables at the door, who possessed power instantly to search the house, and that nothing could prevent their doing so. Upon hearing the Sheriff's announcement of his own office and authority, Mrs. Lorraine visibly changed countenance, and, that face usually cold as marble, became instinct with very visible agitation; yet she once more commanded herself into a tone of perfect repose, when she replied, that the Sheriff had come at an inconvenient hour, that his visits should at all times be unquestionably welcome, as she had nothing to conceal, but that as the nuns were all most particularly engaged at that moment, she begged he

would return next day. This request not being acceded to, she suggested that he might remain in the reception room an hour, till the nuns should be disengaged from their devotions; but this also the Sheriff declined, saying, his interview with the imprisoned lady must be immediate, or otherwise the law should take its course—that he regretted there was no legal provision for his making a regular visitation to inspect the Convent, but that on this occasion, an oath having been taken that there was a captive in the Nunnery, unjustly and unwillingly incarcerated, he had no choice but to insist on an immediate personal interview.

“Stay,” said Mrs. Lorraine, hastily: “if you mean that wretched maniac, sister Theresa, she is dangerous beyond description. None in this house dare enter her cell!”

“I dare!” replied the Sheriff, in a voice of stern resolution. “Lead the way, Mrs. Lorraine, or let others do so. No earthly power can impede my search now.”

The Lady Abbess, hesitatingly, and most unwillingly, advanced along the dreary echoing passages, which Lady Anne well remembered, and seeing that Mrs. Lorraine, agitated and pre-occupied, never once looked round, she silently paused before a door, which belonged, as she knew, to the cell of sister Agnes, and having noiselessly opened it, she gently stole in, and having closed it, glanced anxiously around.

According to her utmost hopes and wishes,

Lady Anne found the object of her search, but so changed, that at the first glance she scarcely identified her old governess. Sister Agnes, who did not look round, was seated on her only chair, in an attitude of the deepest despondency, her head resting on her hands, her face colourless, her figure emaciated, her whole expression indicative of languid, hopeless, objectless misery. For several minutes, Lady Anne stood in sad and astonished contemplation of the indescribable alteration in Miss Turton's whole aspect, but some slight movement caused her old friend to look up, with an almost vacant gaze. The next moment, uttering a low suppressed scream of joy, sister Agnes started up from her seat, and rushing into the arms of Lady Anne, burst into an agony of tears, while she exclaimed, in a sobbing hysterical voice, "You are come at last! Oh! how I have almost hopelessly longed to see you once again. I thought there never was to be a joy for me on earth again! But above all joys, Lady Anne, to see you here *alone*! How can that be allowed?"

"It is not permitted. I have stolen this interview," replied Lady Anne with hurried earnestness. "Whatever you have to say, say it quickly. If you wish to tell me anything——"

"Anything! oh, everything! I have worlds to say, Lady Anne. Hours or days could not tell the half;—but, my dear and kind pupil, let my first word be,—even if it were the last I am ever to utter,—this one advice, given to you now from most painful experience,—never, never become

the inmate of this Convent. As you value happiness on earth or in heaven, avoid one. As you value truth, delicacy, and real usefulness, do not remain one hour here that you can help. All I told you when writing, came short of the dreadful reality. Life is a dreary blank here. In my last letter——”

“Your letter? I received none! It never reached me! Never! You are under the old school-girl discipline now, of having your letters read; therefore, from the day you plunged within these dreary hopeless walls, our intercourse has been cut off. Now tell me all, dear Miss Turton. Let nothing be withheld from one who longs to serve you. You seem all in this house, like those men in the Caliph Vathek’s Hall, whose hearts were broiling under black veils.”

A long conversation ensued, during which Lady Anne gave Miss Turton a very brief outline of all that had befallen herself since she escaped from the Convent, and extracted from her *ci-devant* government in return, many revelations of what is withheld from young proselytes, till they have been beguiled into taking the irrevocable vows, by which they become alienated from the natural protection of parents and relatives. Miss Turton did not hesitate to say that she would give worlds to revoke her solemn oath of allegiance to the Convent, the full meaning and extent of which she had only since learned to measure.

“Tell me, Miss Turton, do you not wish to be released from this den?” asked Lady Anne, in

accents of the deepest compassion. "You know me; therefore you know that my mind shall have no rest, nor my eyes a wink of sleep, till steps are taken for your deliverance from a captivity into which you are beguiled by false pretences."

"Dearest Lady Anne! Though I shall come out a beggar, stripped of every hard-earned shilling, gained once laboriously in my long life of teaching, yet, obtain if you can, my mental and bodily freedom, and my jailors shall be welcome to the rest. On my bended knees I should prayerfully return thanks for being restored to the common privileges of humanity. Give me, once more, free as the air of heaven around us, the liberty of thought and action, which I so madly relinquished,—let me no longer be degraded to the rank of a mere animal, obeying the look of a master,—obeying the will of others, against my will, and even against my own conscience. But you cannot release me! No, you cannot! The nuns here are all so childish and so obedient, that they are like great big little girls, but I am not yet broke in, and must, therefore, be sent abroad."

"Let no vain alarms agitate you, dear Miss Turton," said Lady Anne, "I have good news to tell you."

"Good news! that would be a rarity to me here."

"Then listen! I make myself answerable that you shall be free before the clock strikes again. No bird in the forest is more at liberty than you shall be to-day. The blue sky shall be over your

head, and we shall stroll through the open fields, as in former days together. The Sheriff, who is in this house, will at once deliver you. At dear happy Heatherbrae, how differently from former days, you and I shall speak together of Convent life. There you must tell me all——”

“Not all, Lady Anne—not all!” interrupted Miss Turton, mournfully. “It is not for your ears to hear all the secrets of the confessional. I must draw a very long black veil over these. If even their printed books on confession be what they are, what shall be said of their secrets? * No; my best consolation for all my recent sufferings is, to find this opportunity of warning you, Lady Anne. Be a beggar in the streets, rather than make yourself what I am.”

A momentary pause ensued, not a sound was heard, and at length Lady Anne silently took the hand of Miss Turton, and led her towards the door. When they reached it, she said, “We must claim your liberty instantly. I trust, dear Miss Turton, that you and I each leave this place a wiser and a better Christian than we entered it. Your experience, like that of the Spartan slaves, must be my best lesson and warning.”

Sister Agnes, pale as death, closed her eyes, while her quivering lips refused to articulate a word; but, grasping the arm of Lady Anne, with a look of grateful affection, she advanced to meet Mrs. Lorraine; and at once addressing the Sheriff, claimed protection from the law of liberty that is

* Letter to Lord Shrewsbury, by Pierce Connelly, M.A.

yet paramount in Great Britain—Great as long as it is free.

A week had elapsed, and beside the brightly-glowing fire at Heatherbrae sat a cheerful circle of friends, among whom Lord Iona now looked so gay and animated that sunshine itself seemed dull in comparison. The ladies wore no peculiar dress or uniform, but each was actively and agreeably occupied in works of usefulness, fully intent on discharging, with zeal and fidelity, every duty of charity abroad and of domestic life at home. Even Mrs. Clinton, though pale and drooping with smothered anguish, still endeavoured not to cast a gloom on the rest. Though, in the depth of her depression, no bright smile, as in former days, sparkled in her eyes, and her wan cheek spoke of hope departed and of affections blighted, yet even she did not say, with rebellious discontent, "I will sorrow without ceasing, and I will seek no comfort."

"Ah ! why need virtue fear the frowns of fate ?
Hers what no wealth can win, no power create !
A little world of clear and cloudless day,
Not wreck'd by storms, nor moulder'd by decay."

The post arrived,—and who does not hail its approach with pleasure? There is a hopefulness in the human mind that renders the appearance of a letter almost invariably welcome ; and from childhood, when the size of the red seal is the measure of its merit, to old age, when many a black one reminds the aged pilgrim that his friends are pre-

ceding him, few ever receive their daily letters without a pleasant anticipation in tearing off the envelope. Lady Edith was this morning the favoured individual to whom the large packet was directed, which M^cRonald now brought in on a salver; and as the old veteran delivered it, he (who had carefully studied the hand-writing of all Lady Edith's correspondents) cast an anxious glance towards Mrs. Clinton diligently reading in a distant corner of the room.

Lady Edith started when she had examined the direction;—she turned to the seal, and it seemed as if every drop of blood in her body glowed in her face with surprise;—she opened the letter, and rushed through page after page of closely-written manuscript, till at length having reached the end she heaved a deep sigh, not of sorrow, but of infinite thankfulness. Large tears quivered in the eyes of Lady Edith Tremorne, when she rose from her seat, walked across the room, and kindly laying her hand on Mrs. Clinton's shoulder, looked in her pallid face, saying, in accents of very solemn congratulation, "My dear friend, do you remember what our favourite poet says—'The wretch of to-day may be happy to-morrow'? You have borne, with admirable resignation, the greatest weight of sorrow that your spirit could endure and live. Can you bear an equal weight of joy?"

Mrs. Clinton, observing that the hand-writing was her husband's, almost shrieked with hysterical excitement, started from her seat in an agony of

suspense, snatched the letter from Lady Edith's hands, tremblingly glanced over the few first lines, and, in a state of almost insane felicity, fainted in the arms of Beatrice. Soon after her restoration to consciousness, Mrs. Clinton felt as if it were a dream from which she never could wish to awake, as her husband's arms were around her, and the two boys were clinging to her side. Yes; the happy wife was a wife still, and the happy mother was still a mother. Her very heart seemed breaking with joy. She leaned her forehead on the shoulder of Mr. Clinton, and they wept together. No questions were asked—not a word could yet be uttered on either side; but it was enough!—he had returned, and what more could she desire!

Mr. Clinton was a worn and altered man. Deep thought and anxious care were marked indelibly on his emaciated countenance; but there was a clear intelligence in his eyes, now looking full at those around him, very different from the practised downcast, lack-lustre aspect which they had of late assumed. He spoke also in a natural tone,—not measured, slow, and sententious, as his recent manner had been; and he seemed to have recovered the free use of his limbs, which were no longer kept straight in rigid Pre-Raphaelite attitudes. The very hair on his head had lost its Popish tendency, and had escaped being tonsured.

“Mr. Clinton,” said Lady Edith, after some time given to all the incoherences of a joyful surprise, and frankly extending her hand to him, “You look like a Protestant again—and you are one?”

"Yes; God be praised, I am!—more than ever—heart and soul. Oh, how I long to tell you my history! Fiction itself may hide her diminished head beside the truths that I must relate to all who have loved me, and mourned for me as dead. How narrowly I have escaped committing a moral suicide; and how little do I deserve this too kind welcome home. Home! how many blessings it comprises, which I, deluded mortal, was about to abandon for ever!"

There were prayers that night at Heatherbrae, conducted by Mr. Clinton, with an intensity of devotion not to be described; while, with sobs and tears of unutterable joy, Mrs. Clinton knelt between her two boys, and in low, earnest accents fervently re-echoed every word as it was spoken, of thankfulness and praise—of faith, hope, and universal charity.

"At the instigation of Father Eustace, I had snapped asunder every chain that binds the heart of one human being to another, and become a perfect fakir in austerities. I left myself no tie but that of headlong obedience to my confessor himself," observed Mr. Clinton, thoughtfully, while his affectionate wife, with tearful ecstasy, clasped his arm, and his boys clung fondly to his knee. "But when I discovered the use that was to be made of this spiritual despotism,—to defend what was obviously sinful,—to make the darkest crimes seem bright, if committed under the colour of obedience,—when falsehood was to be enjoined for the promotion of any Popish object,—and when

truth was to be contemptuously set aside, if it interfered with those Popish interests which I was bound hand and foot to promote,—then, feeling myself called upon to become ‘a conscious partaker in undoubted sin,’* the nightmare of superstition became so fearful that I started wide awake at once, and escaped for my very life.”

“It is the mystery of mysteries to me that there can be found any one, with human intellect and human feelings, who so mistakes the character of his Creator, and the purposes for which he was made, as to become a Jesuit,” observed Lady Edith, meditatively. “I could wonder all day, and lie awake to wonder all night again, that any mortal can read the works of Alphonso Liguori without both horror and contempt.”

“He proclaims a certainty of salvation to any proselyte who shall blindly obey any one Papal priest—Father Eustace, for instance,—and the smallest doubt of his commands being right becomes a guilty mistrust,” observed Mr. Clinton thoughtfully. “When my two churchwardens demanded whether I had finally abandoned the Protestant faith, Father Eustace whispered to me that I must answer in these words, ‘I say, no.’ He maintained that this merely meant that I said the word ‘No.’ He observed that this was a lawful equivocation; though, should these words not satisfy my questioners, I must confirm the equivocation with an oath. He added, ‘You are not thus deceiving your churchwardens; but, for a

* Connolly’s Letter to Lord Shrewsbury, p. 7.

good and sufficient reason, letting them deceive themselves.' ”

“ Father Eustace considers truth to be quite as dangerous to society as falsehood,” observed Mrs. Clinton, “ and makes no distinction between them. When I one day implored him to tell me whether you had not entered the Monastery at Inverness, he answered, ‘ I know nothing about it.’ That meant, it appears, ‘ I know nothing about it proper to be mentioned.’ ”

“ I should have told Father Eustace, pell-mell, my whole opinion of such conduct—such utter violation of truth, which is as much broken by an evasion as by a downright falsehood,”—exclaimed Lord Iona. “ My indignation, like Bob Acres’ courage, would have oozed out at my finger-ends. Did you not do the indignant on such an occasion ? ”

“ No ; these evasions are merely what Father Eustace and Co. consider making the best of a bad business,” answered Mrs. Clinton ; “ and very bad indeed the best is. He has a degree of diplomatic skill which Talleyrand might envy, and manages that all the strange legends or stories he tells shall become burned, like enamel, into the inmost depths of the imagination—inventions which Milton characterises as—

“ ‘ Abominable, unutterable, and worse
Than Fables yet have feign’d, or Fear conceived.’ ”

CHAPTER XV.

"The God who framed
Mankind to be one mighty family,
Himself our Father and the world our home."

COWPER.

It was a day of glorious sunshine at Heatherbrae,—the garden a rainbow of flowers, light shadows chasing each other across the mountain side, the cattle all looking as if grouped by Cuypp himself, and the noisy river roaring like a cataract along its rocky bed. All was joyous in nature. The salmon shooting along the stream, the birds hovering merrily over head, and the cattle enjoying their daisied pasture. Beatrice stood at the gorge of a beautiful highland glen, looking down upon the scattered village of Clanmarina for the first time since it had become in part her own, and a glow of heartfelt interest spread like sunshine over her happy spirit, when she thought that the prosperous felicity which appeared so bright and smiling in the Protestant half of the little hamlet, might soon be extended to the Eaglescairn tenantry. Perhaps the glow on her cheek became deeper when telling herself that in all her pleasant anticipations of future usefulness, she might hope for the cheerful sympathy

and energetic assistance of one whose apparently heedless vivacity concealed without diminishing the warmth of a heart and the brightness of an intellect which Beatrice thought had no equal.

She seated herself, looking like one of Gainsborough's most beautiful portraits, on a mossy bank, carpeted with wild primroses and blue-bells, to admire at leisure the grand old oak-trees overhanging and almost meeting across the river, while she silently wondered to notice on how little nourishment they had managed for centuries to survive, clasping the bare rocks with roots and fibres, but scarcely in a single instance reaching the earth. "So," thought Beatrice, "did my hopes, that had nothing to rest on, always increase and grow freshly from day to-day, that sooner or later my story should be unravelled! It has at last come out,—oh! how wonderfully! and in bestowing my long-hoarded affections now entirely on my cousin, Lord Eaglescairn, I reward his disinterested preference and secure my own felicity. It is a great privilege, no longer to conceal from him the extent and depth of my attachment, for long have I felt and known that it could end only with my life, and that during life it would be my greatest earthly delight,—not to the exclusion of better hopes, but to their truest security."

The pure and innocent thoughts of Beatrice were so occupied in building up her own little fabric of future blessings to be bestowed on those around, and to be enjoyed with grateful devotion

herself, that she did not observe the rustling sound of a light footstep on the turf, till suddenly, with a look of almost breathless pleasure and surprise, Lord Eaglescairn stood before her, and in accents of tenderness, such as no voice but his own could have expressed, he exclaimed, "Beatrice! yes! Fortunate man that I am to have found at once what I was hastening in search of,—Lady Clanmarina!"

The young face of Beatrice had already been drenched in blushes, and lighted up with a smile at the unexpected appearance of her lover, but deeper and deeper still became the scarlet on her cheek, when she said in a low quivering voice, "That name is one I never mean to assume,—never, unless you oblige me to do so."

"No!" exclaimed Lord Eaglescairn, seating himself on the turf by her side, and looking at the glowing countenance of Beatrice with an expression of tender earnestness. "The title is yours without dispute ——"

"When I had no name, you offered me one," said Beatrice, with generous frankness. "Are you too proud now, to let me shield your father's name from dishonour by never letting the circumstance of my succession be known? To you let me still remain Beatrice, and for the world, let them never know the freak of fortune that has occurred to us. It is sufficient that they should know I am proved to be a De Bathe, the grand-daughter of your father's predecessor. It matters not to any one now what succession I gain, or how it was delayed. If our happiness is to depend on each

other, as you have so long most disinterestedly wished, then your father's good name becomes no less dear to myself than to you, and I can show my sense of his repentance and of his desire to make me all the compensation he could, when he planned bestowing on me,— somebody that he thought it just possible I might be happy with."

If ever man's love were totally untarnished by worldly interest it was Lord Eaglescairn's, who now, with all the fervour of impassioned eloquence, poured out his whole feelings to Beatrice, in a burst of grateful emotion; and perhaps there never were two happier hours spent in this world, than those during which the two young lovers entered into mutual explanations, rallied each other with sportive humour, recriminated in jest, spoke sense and sentiment, wisdom and nonsense, planned schemes of happiness for the future, laughed till they were in tears over old recollections, and discussed as they at length strolled slowly and unwillingly homewards to dinner, many a hope of living long in a too-happy-for-this-world state of mutual confidence in each other, and of unwearying benevolence to all around.

"To me," said Lord Eaglescairn, "ever since I knew you, there have been but two places in the world,—where you are and where you are not! If a heart entirely your own is worth having, mine has already bestowed on you attachment enough for a dozen of ordinary lovers."

"And I know how to value it," said Beatrice, in a low tone of deep emotion. "My future life

shall prove that! Think what a change to me, since I thought it a duty to extinguish every hope for myself or others,—when I believed myself a waif and stray belonging to nobody! Even then your generous nature would have overlooked all, except your own too partial estimate of me.”

“My spirits are soaring to-day like a balloon on a sunbeam! I am quite in a blaze of felicity to see every wish of my heart realized, and I deserve it, for hope has always been with me a perfect air plant that flourished upon nothing,” said Lord Eaglescairn, in a tone of animated sensibility that became him well. “But it almost ceased to exist weeks ago, when my ardent love taught me to feel how undeserving I was, that such a heart as yours could ever be mine. Now, poor as the youngest of younger sons, how much less right had I to hope than ever!”

“You do not, of course, allow a single momentary thought to dwell on the disparity that either was or is between us in fortune,” said Beatrice, colouring deeply. “You told me, when I was a nameless foundling, that you were ready to live, starve, or die, for me, had your father then disinherited you; therefore, now that other circumstances have, as it were, again disinherited you, my happiness is, to feel how very generous an attachment it is in my power to return.”

“To return and to reward. Great is my reward, indeed, Beatrice,” said Lord Eaglescairn, while tears actually started into his eyes, and he turned away for some moments, unable to speak from

emotion. "If I know nothing else, I know my own demerits; but I know also that my attachment to yourself is deep and strong as any earthly feeling can be, therefore my heart's desire is, to become all that you wish me."

"And mine to become all that you think me, and more," said Beatrice, in a tone of charming sensibility, as she glanced at the handsome countenance of her lover, lighted up with joy. "I wish you thought less of me, that you may never be disappointed."

"Impossible! Trust me for knowing that I have found the Koh-i-noor diamond among ladies. The *rose speciosissima* and *grandiosa*! but think what I have suffered lest another be preferred to myself!" interrupted Lord Eaglescain. "I know my own good fortune, but can I ever be worthy of gaining such a prize! I sink into despondency when considering what the man should be who gains your affection. How shall I characterise one who can recommend himself only by his devoted attachment!"

"There have been all sorts of Lord Eaglescains in their day, with suitable appellations," said Beatrice, gracefully leaning on the arm of her happy lover. "He who is now discovered to have been my grandfather, was 'The Proud Lord,'—then there was 'The Priest-ridden Lord,' and 'The Extravagant Lord.' What soubriquet do you mean to deserve?"

"I ought to be 'The Landless Lord,' my whole property now being picturesquely situated

in the moon; but I can think of no name for myself at this moment but 'The Happy Lord Eaglescairn!'" replied he, clasping the hand of Beatrice in his own, and resuming his wonted tone of vivacity. "The greatest novelty in our family would certainly be, to hear myself called 'The Protestant Lord Eaglescairn!' During how many generations we have been the slaves of Rome,—ever since the time of James II., when the name of a priest and of a plotter were synonymous, and when the whole moral law was contained in the Pope's pocket, and in the coffers of his treasury. I have often lately thought of Petrarch's words, who, being in the Pope's household, fled from it as from a city of destruction, saying, 'I know by experience that there is here no piety, no charity, no faith, no reverence of God, no fear; that there are here no holy, just, or upright men; that there is no care or seriousness; nothing, in short, even human. Love, shame, propriety, candour, are banished thence. I say nothing of truth, for what place is there for truth, where all is full of falsehood,—the sacred recesses of the temples, the tribunals of the judges, the seat of the pontiffs, in fine, the mouths, the nods, the gestures, the voices, the countenances, the minds of men, are all false and counterfeit.' It is from being the besotted advocate of Rome, with all her absurdities, her idolatries, her errors and her abominations, that, like Petrarch, I have been delivered. On such quicksands I might have been building through life, but for the open

criminality that disgusted me in Father Eustace, and the beautiful exemplification of Christian excellence that I witnessed at Heatherbrae."

Tears of pleasure started into the beautiful eyes of Beatrice, as with smiling timidity she gave a short quick glance of intense pleasure to her companion, but she felt unwilling or unable to speak, and he continued—

"I found lately in my father's library an old tract called 'New Shreds of the Old Snare,' and the snare is not worn out yet! Father Eustace would have forced me to believe everything, and drove me for a time into believing nothing. When he saw my inquiring mind stuck on the horns of a dilemma, he tried to make me swallow it, horns and all, but that was impossible. I could not accommodate my mind to his elastic code of morals, which consists entirely in becoming an automaton, growing blinder every hour, with no idea but to serve Rome in a course of small morality, of cheap absolutions, and of idle empty mechanical ceremonies. Accustomed to take from us the holy liberty of the mind, Father Eustace aims only at the destruction of the body and the despotic guidance of the soul. From such a dissolution of myself and inward annihilation, I am preserved, and from continuing in a church which is as Genebrand once said, 'not apostolical, but apostate-ical.'"

"The Popish superstition certainly is a grand falsehood, full of chimerical promises, and many of its fables are like the reverie of an opium-eater; as it affords a home to every exaggeration of fana-

ticism, idolatry, guilt, and superstition," replied Beatrice, earnestly. "With its ever-growing creed and old Pagan ceremonials, those who become once shrouded in the delusions of Rome are merely to obey, but not to understand, any more than the child who holds a shell to his ear and fancies he knows what it says. The object of a Popish, as of a heathen priest, is to conceal mysteries, not to explain them, and to disunite religion from morals. Romish principles are as out of place in an English drawing-room, as an Italian organ-boy would be in a palace."

"Sir Allan pointed out to me yesterday what an eminent author says, and what I am sure our own recent observation may confirm, that Popery is 'a monstrous compound of secret fraud and force—of hypocrisies and villanies of all sorts and degrees—of monks, friars, cardinals, kings, and popes—of hypocrites of every class, and villains of every grade, all banded together to defy God and ruin man,'" said Lord Iona solemnly. "How deeply thankful M^cAlpine feels, and ought to feel, for being delivered from that strange delusion which had really rendered him as intellectually tipsy with mental excitement as opium makes its victims."

"It was a wonderful escape from the fangs of an uncle, who, being Sir Allan's confessor, knew him better than he knows himself!" said Beatrice. "A priest such as Father Ambrose, who understands every secret weakness or folly, may even cringe before his victim, but must secretly despise him, for relinquishing all that makes man

a man in dignity and worth, but these delusions strike root in imaginative minds, and are not to be reached by reason or argument."

"Now," replied Beatrice, cheerfully, yet with a shy agitated blush, "the horizon of life, lately all gloom to so many in this house, is enlivened by a very bright rainbow of hope. Sir Allan and Lady Anne have a perfect wealth of felicity themselves, with a long vista before them of future happiness, all snatched back from the gulf of Romanism, into which their best feelings were about to be frozen; and we ourselves, who were in some little danger, shall not now be very miserable."

"Not very, unless a state of unimaginable happiness, and of super-felicity can make me so. To me the future seems almost as vividly present as the past, and nothing in life could appear even a trial to me, if we double all our joys and share all our sorrows together. I shall live all my life as if there were not another being on the earth to be loved but yourself. Death itself cannot separate us now. Few make the most of their materials for enjoyment, but ours, Beatrice—my own Beatrice now—shall be the very quintessence of domestic felicity, distilled over a fire of sound principle and energetic usefulness. The only drawback in the biography of our hearts now united into one will be, that our time shall pass too swiftly. I have a vision like Alnaschar of unearthly felicity, to be realized with you as my much-loved com-

panion, when days shall seem like moments, and moments acquire the value of ages."

More than an hour elapsed,—if the truth must be told, more than two,—during which Beatrice and Lord Eaglescain continued a conversation which varied like a tessellated pavement from grave to gay, while in the exercise of intellect, thought, and conscience they felt how great is the bounty of God to man, in gifting him with so many sources of blameless enjoyment. "I have waited, suffered, hoped and feared for a perfect age," said Lord Eaglescain, "while desiring to secure your companionship along the road of life, my Beatrice, now to be hedged in with every domestic blessing, under the sanction of our own Creator and of His holy word, to be our daily study hereafter together."

"Social in essence is the Christian God ;
Social in life the scene our Saviour trod ;
And selfish chains contract the mind
That should encircle human kind."—*R. Montgomery.*

CHAPTER XVI.

"Our life is all chequer'd with pleasures and woes,
That chase one another like waves of the deep."—MOORE.

POOR Bessie M^cRonald, broken in heart as in health, might often now be seen under the old oak-tree, where formerly she had read so many of Mrs. Lorraine's bewildering books, but now one only volume was the subject of her heartfelt and most reverential study—need it be said that this volume was the Holy Word of God. All day she worked diligently in her widowed step-mother's nursery and dairy, as well as among the bees, the flowers, and the poultry, but the dawn of every morning and the twilight of evening saw her quietly seated in profound attention over the revered lesson, often with tears blistering the pages before her, but always, with a serious earnest countenance, attending to the great revelation of God to each created mortal. Every day at a distance, had Bessie only looked up, a flitting form might have been observed hovering among the trees, and anxiously, with melancholy but unalterable interest, gazing towards the spot where she sat. Robert Carre and Bessie by tacit mutual consent never met, but obviously avoided each other, yet their thoughts were always together.

Though dressed in the deepest mourning for his father, and with mourning yet deeper in his handsome countenance, he seemed unable to tear himself away from that corner of the hay-field whence he could see his once-loved Bessie, though painfully uncertain how far her restoration to right principles might be permanently depended on ; and many an hour, when she felt alone in the world, desolate and forlorn, one eye watched over her with ceaseless interest, and one heart beat with yet ardent attachment for her, and for her only.

The young girl had remained out unusually late one night, and being obliged on her way home to pass by the Popish chapel, beside which many exciting placards were put up, she observed that to the list always fastened on that door of those denounced by Father Eustace, among whom Lady Edith had long figured as one, the name of Robert Carre had been lately added in peculiarly conspicuous characters of red ink. Bessie was about to hurry on, anxiously escaping every recollection connected with the confessor and his machinations, when the sound of a voice reached her—a voice only too familiar to her ears—and in stopping to ascertain whence it proceeded, she heard the slow pompous tone of Father Eustace addressing a numerous party of nearly an hundred ragged Donnybrook-Fair-looking Irishmen, who had come to Clanmarina professedly as reapers, and they were joined by a moderate sprinkling of one or two Clanmarina Papists of the lowest rank.

“ Do not strike, but if heretics are struck it is

not my fault, nor any man's fault," said Father Eustace impressively. "Remember in particular that bloody-minded heretic Robert Carre, who attacked me yesterday. I do not desire you to burn his stack-yard to the ground, but were it done what would be the harm? If he were in the fire himself, so much the better, though I do not bid you burn him. If his house be consumed with all the inhabitants, who can blame me? At the same time should such an event happen to-night, let those who know anything of the accident call upon me to-morrow. I have absolved many worse sins, if that be a sin; I should rather say it is a merit to rid the world of those who deserve to be driven from it. I shall look out of my window at twelve o'clock to-night, and if there should be a red light towards Daisybank, all I can say is that the misfortune cannot be my doing, though it may be the work of good men and true. What do you all stand there for, staring about like astonished cassowarys, with your hands in your pockets, waiting to have your throats cut by that persecuting crew of Protestants at Heatherbrae! Be alive! Stand up for your rights! Let there be freedom or death; and if one of you dares to vote for Sir Allan, now that he is a bloody-minded apostate, you may christen and bury yourselves, but no priest in Scotland shall do renegades any such offices of religion. Those who disobey me shall be cut off from the living, and not make their graves with the dead. Now, three groans for the Lady of Heatherbrae, and three curses for Robert Carre of Daisybank."

The sensation was immense, and Bessie trembled as she heard the muttered thunder of fifty or an hundred angrily excited voices calling down vengeance on the benefactress of Clanmarina, and on her own dearest of earthly friends and favourites, her once affianced husband, Robert Carre. It was a terrifying sound, and the agitated girl, at a loss what to do, shrunk into her own home, where, seated at the window, she endeavoured to collect her thoughts, and to decide on the best mode of acting. The evening had become nearly dark, and no one was at hand whom she could send to warn either Lady Edith or Robert Carre of the unexpected excitement suddenly raised in the Popish quarter of Clanmarina by the announcement of Father Eustace, that Sir Allan had become an apostate from the Popish faith, and that a new candidate, Mr. O'Grady, a straight-from-Tipperary Irish Papist, was invited to stand for the vacant seat in parliament. He was brought across the seas by Father Eustace himself, who ended his public address that night by saying—"Let us have freedom of election or perish in its defence! If a man amongst you presumes to vote for Sir Allan, he must take the fatal consequences and shall repent it, the latest hour he has to breathe. Down with the heretic nests at Heatherbrae and Daisybank, or else down with your own lives and property. I do not bid you make a riot to-night, but if you go home like cowards in peace, my blessing shall not go along with one of you."

Bessie had not been above a few minutes in her mother's cottage, before she heard the sound of

muffled voices and the trampling of many feet, passing under her window in the direction of Daisybank, and looking out, she saw a tumultuous mob of men and women carrying torches, sticks, flails, pokers, scythes, pitchforks, and reaper's hooks in the direction of Daisybank. Their faces, as they moved past, looked pale and resolute, and a silent determination appeared in their onward progress appalling to witness. Father Eustace walked some part of the way at their head, evidently taking the command, but immediately opposite to where Bessie sat he paused, saying—"Now, my brave fellows! Do no mischief—not that any one could call it mischief to burn the property of a heretic, or even to burn himself. O'Hara and Feeny, mark my words! I will have no hand in any violence. You had much better all disperse and go home, but if you are determined to fight in the cause of your liberty and religion, the shortest road to Daisybank is, through this gate and over that stile, keeping to the left."

Father Eustace moved solemnly away, in an opposite direction, and disappeared slowly in the surrounding darkness, while the mob advanced, headed by Pat M'Dermot, with a suppressed sound of steps and voices in the direction indicated by the priest, who paused at a distance to watch them, and the tyrant dressed in sable canonicals, angrily shook his fist at one or two lingering behind as if about to turn back.

The rioters had evidently a watchword among them, and their leader who drove and dragooned

them forwards was armed with a large sledge-hammer of enormous weight, which he flourished menacingly over his head.

Swifter than wind were the steps with which Bessie, wrapped closely round in her scarf of the M^cAlpine tartan, now fled along the more circuitous route that led through some corn-fields to the dwelling of her endangered friends. The shutters were all closed at Daisybank, and Robert Carre, with his household assembled, was conducting the evening prayers, when a loud knock of startling vehemence at the outer door was followed by a furious ringing at the bell, which ceased not till Robert Carre opened it, and Bessie, almost fainting with terror, stumbled into the house, and breathlessly related all she had heard, or seen, or even imagined.

Scarcely had the swift-footed girl begun to explain her errand, before Robert from her incoherent expressions at once understood the whole purport of her warning, and with the most perfect calmness took instant and vigorous measures to protect his life and property. Accompanied by his cousin Andrew, his dog Ponto, and the farm servants, he formed a regular patrol round the extensive stack-yard of Daisybank, and when the angry mob arrived, expecting to surprise a sleeping foe, they found young Carre not only wide awake, but likewise armed at all points to the teeth. Not a vulnerable spot was to be found on the premises of Daisybank, and the midnight conspirators having no authoritative priest to urge them on,

and being somewhat intimidated by the firing of three guns in the air, "merely," as Andrew said, "*a feu de joye* to welcome them," the whole Popish malcontents dispersed at once, more quietly than they met. When Robert Carre returned home glowing with gratitude to Bessie for her timely warning, and delighted at this opportunity once more to see her, she had vanished. As rapidly as she came, the melancholy and heart-stricken girl retraced her footsteps when she had given the alarm; unable to bear the idea of deliberately meeting her former lover under such altered circumstances, and most unwilling in any way or on any account to thrust herself upon his notice. When safely housed again, she rushed hurriedly into the very small room which she could call her own, bolted the door, and throwing herself on the bed, she clasped her hands over her eyes and burst into a passion of tears. They were not, as formerly, tears that scorched and burned up her soul, but a feeling of devout thankfulness pervaded her mind, that she had lived to serve Robert Carre, and that consciousness softened the harshness of all her previous sorrow, giving verdure and freshness to her agitated spirit. Yes, she had seen Robert once again, she had spoken to him, she had received his warm-hearted thanks before he hurried out to defend his farm-yard, she had caught his eye upon her with a look of kindness, she had felt the pressure of his hand in grateful acknowledgment of her services, and Bessie thought that now she could die happy, that she

could die reconciled to herself, because reconciled to him.

Next day the election was to take place, and both sides promised themselves a small majority, so that the interest excited was keen beyond example. At the first peep of morning, Father Eustace was inspecting the hustings, which were reared through his secret influence on that part of the village belonging to Lord Eaglescain, and he peremptorily placed in the hand of each voter a card with the name of Mr. O'Grady on it, for whom he made them swear to vote. Several priests had been brought over from Ireland by the new Irish candidate to assist in his canvas, and a most animated scene of Hibernian disorder it was. Father Eustace seemed everywhere at once, and nowhere long, while his Irish brethren were quite at home in such scenes. At one time, he stood in a cart adorned with green boughs and lilacs, bringing in headlong a waggon-load of voters, some tied in pairs together to prevent escape,—at another place Father Eustace was pursuing a refractory constituent over hedge and ditch, to force him into giving his free and independent vote for Mr. O'Grady. One poor man, M^r Tavish,* who had two of his children at Lady Edith's school, and was himself, though a good man, not a good Papist, had discovered that his Christian name in the list of voters was registered wrong,—David instead of Duncan he had been called,—therefore he rather gladly declined to take the necessary

* *Times* newspaper, 31st July, 1852.

oath ; but Father Eustace, not to be conquered by a trifling difficulty, took the poor man to an ale-house, where he was unwillingly re-baptized by priest O'Connell, who assured him that this ought to satisfy the most unruly conscience, nevertheless still the unwilling recruit demurred. " You ungrateful renegade ! " said Father Eustace, collaring his captive at last, and dragging him towards the poll. " Duncan McTavish ! vote ; or be destroyed body and soul. Brute ! will you not hear your own priest ? * Did I not bury your wife last week for you, ungrateful idiot as you are, and took not above 10*l*. for my dues ? "

" I'll bury the next myself," replied Duncan, sulkily ; " but I cannot vote to-day. I tied off last night with Donald McAlpine. Though he has broke his leg since, and can't attend, still a promise is a promise."

" Not if I absolve you from it," said Father Eustace ; " in that case it is no more binding than a rotten straw."

" Ah ! " said one of O'Grady's supporters, tipping a knowing wink to Father Eustace, " I saw Donald brought to the hustings on a shutter this minute, he gave his whole and entire vote for Sir Allan ! "

" The rascal ; I'll do for him ! " exclaimed Duncan, in high excitement, " his whole and entire vote indeed ! But my whole and entire vote shall go contrary to his, therefore small profit he'll get by his shameful trick. Little did I expect it of Donald."

* *Times.*

"Ah! these Protestants will do anything, so they can only take our freedom of election from us," answered Mr. O'Grady's champion, forcibly hurrying the enraged Duncan straight to the poll. "Now vote like a man, — and like a good man too."

"Hallo, M^cTavish!" exclaimed Andrew Carre, "so you are going to break faith with us. Poor Donald M^cAlpine died yesterday morning to be sure, but——"

"Died!" exclaimed Duncan, staggering back before he had pledged himself, aghast with consternation, "If the O'Gradys have deceived me on purpose, they shall pay for it. I'd vote for the Grand Turk himself before I'd vote for any reverend deceivers that would cheat me by a falsehood."

"Beware what you say!" exclaimed Father Eustace, in a voice of thunder, "you shall be a marked man for life,—or rather for death,—if you do not instantly support the cause of liberty, by recording your vote. I shall put up your name on the chapel door, I shall denounce you at the altar, I shall forbid you to enter the church, I shall refuse to baptize your child, I shall have the seat in chapel torn up where you sit, I shall let you be buried like a dog, I shall——"

Duncan M^cTavish became pale as a corpse, and grasped hold of a pillar for support; his lips quivered, his knees smote against each other, and the hand visibly trembled in which he held his stick. Father Eustace seeing this advantage, raised his hand as if about to pronounce a fearful malediction

on the wavering and terrified culprit, when a sudden shout attracted the attention of both priest and voter, the street became suddenly filled with a roaring and yelling multitude, urged on to apparent insanity by the Irish brigade of priests belonging to Mr. O'Grady, and before Father Eustace could look round again for his prisoner, Duncan M^cTavish had sprung down the steps of the hustings and disappeared. The next moment he found himself within the door of that mournful house in which he then discovered his old friend Donald M^cAlpine stretched out for interment, having died early on the previous day.

The shouting mob which advanced, consisted of a pell-mell gathering of the lowest rabble from the Popish quarter of Clanmarina, dressed like Falstaff's ragged regiment, in most picturesque tatters, and even more undisciplined than that celebrated corps. They had banded themselves together in a furious onset against the recently bereaved Robert Carre, who was slowly and firmly walking up the street, clothed in deep mourning, to record his vote for Sir Allan, amidst a storm of hisses and execrations: his countenance alone was calm, his step deliberate, and his eye mild, but solemn in its expression, as he looked mournfully around on the tumultuous mob, whose violence at length brought him to a complete stand still.

"My friends and neighbours;" he said in a voice more of pity than of anger, "be rational in your conduct. There are no animals but geese and serpents that hiss. If you have anything

reasonable to say, let me hear it. I am but going to exercise the birthright of a Scotchman ; I am going to give my vote for the Chief of McAlpine, the successor of our good Sir Evan, the man that seems best fitted to maintain our laws, our real liberty, and our religion——”

“ Down with tyrants ! down with oppressors ! O’Grady and freedom of election for ever ! keep him off the hustings ! ” shouted an Irish priest. “ Hold him back ; away with the heretic ! Do not strike, but he who lets that man vote, is no friend to liberty ; Pat, stand on the steps there ! Let nobody go up without my signal. We must defend our freedom——”

Robert meanwhile resolutely advanced, his tall figure, calm demeanour, and invincible air, giving him an irresistible command, while the active use he had occasion to make of his arms in pushing aside the myriads of his opponents, gave to young Carre’s progressive motion the look of a person swimming through the crowd, while opposed by a very tumultuous sea through which to buffet his way forwards.

Father Eustace stood at the top of the steps, and Father O’Connell at the bottom, so that the fortress of the hustings seemed impregnable ; but young Carre suddenly darted forward to one of the pillars, swung himself like a sailor up to the platform, and before any new violence could be perpetrated upon him, in spite of priest or mob, hooting or yelling, recorded his vote. Andrew Carre then with a loud cheer threw his hat in the air,

exclaiming, " Hurrah ! our majority is ten, and the poll closes in an hour. Hurrah for the Chief ! Hurrah for McAlpine ! "

Robert made his cousin an imperative sign to be silent, for this was no time when any friend of humanity or of liberty could desire to increase the excitement in an almost delirious mob, as ignorant of religion or politics as the people of Timbuctoo, and already dangerously infuriated ; but the priests thought differently, for it was evident that they aimed at having young Carre both bludgeoned and stoned. The young farmer's forbearance was mistaken for fear or indecision, so that the Irish reapers, becoming more outrageous, seized on every missile they could find, and hurled it at the two Carres, who stood side by side, pale, but firm, while they plainly perceived how the priests were hounding on the mob to their destruction. No one dared now to be neutral, and the hustings looked like a beleaguered fortress.

" Remember ! " said Father O'Connell, whirling his whip, while he stood beside a car of imprisoned voters ; " remember the bloody-minded attack yesterday on Father Eustace, whose life was saved only by his own courage and presence of mind ! Lady Edith looking on too, and Sir Allan assisting. Observe those two black sheep on the hustings ! They headed a mob yesterday that would have murdered your priest. What do they deserve now ? Cowardly wretches ! if you let them escape, the guilt be upon your own heads,—I'll never absolve one of you more ! Donald McTavish !

so they've caught you again! Tied in a cart there, neck and heels, how do you feel? Come and vote instantly, like a free and independent freeholder as you are, or take the consequences.* Suppose the hand of death heavy upon you to-morrow, and that a messenger comes to me to attend you in your dying moments. If there were no other priest in the way, I would be bound to go. I dare not refuse to attend the death-bed of such a being. (Great sensation.) I would go to attend such a wretch with a heavy heart, without much hope, because I would feel that I was going to administer sacraments to one whose conscience had become so seared, and whose heart was so rotten at the core, that I could not have much expectation of effecting a conversion. Overpowered with the impression that I was about to visit a perjured wretch, who, for a miserable bribe, had betrayed the dearest interests of his country and his religion, and borne down with the harrowing reflection that God, in his just anger, might leave such a wretch to die in his sins, (sensation,) I should fear that my mission would be fruitless—that I could have no hope of converting a heart so hardened, so lost to every sense of duty and religion, as to vote in support of that apostate traitor, Sir Allan. Keep from him and his supporters, for the devils of hell are his companions, and no saint in heaven shall pray for him in his dying hour."

Donald M^cTavish, completely overpowered by

* *Times*, 28th July, 1852.

such a burst of imprecations poured out on his special account, was lifted from the cart and borne up to the hustings again, trembling and bewildered, but still evidently most unwilling to record his newly acquired name as voting at all, and shrunk back in agonized perplexity when the pen was thrust into his hand.

"Donald M^cTavish," said Robert Carre, with grave anxiety, "consult nothing but your own conscience now, and be perfectly free to exercise your own right. He is the free man, whom the truth makes free. If it cost me my life this moment, I'll stand by you, rather than see any man forced to vote when I know his conscience bids him not, and when I see you urged into breaking your own solemn promise to the unburied dead."

"See him tampering with an elector," exclaimed Father O'Connell, in a voice of thunder, "the battle is at our doors, now! Up, brothers!" (deafening cheers.) "What occurred to your unoffending and defenceless pastor yesterday, may be attempted by other means to-morrow. He had nearly been slaughtered in the shambles of Protestant butchery. Law and justice slept, while the dark enemies of bigot hate would deal out our ruin."

The sensation was immense, and every rioter looked upon Duncan M^cTavish as doomed to immediate and terrible destruction in this world, and for ever, as the intimidation of Father O'Connell did not limit itself to a present life, but extended itself over soul and body in another.

"My good friends, if this riot continue, the polling must be stopped," said Robert Carre to some of those who crowded nearest him. "Mr. O'Connell, as whipper-in for the Popish party, has given you a fine specimen to-day of the eloquence which is commonly called rigmarole. He wishes to get up a riot that might do for all Ireland together; but little did I dream that ever good, honest respectable Clanmarina could be worked up by any Popish aggressor into becoming the theatre of such a brawl as this. Hats stove in—caps knocked off—shops closed—women shrieking—men hooting—stones hurled, and a fierce onslaught even upon me, your neighbour, and from my boyhood, your friend. Duncan M'Tavish seems likely to fare no better—he could scarcely fare worse, and all through a disciplined and united force of straight-from-Connaught Romish priests. They are mere voteless nobodies, but are acting here as election-agents and touters, who wish by this riotous red-hot zeal to convert us into a belief in scarlet hats and red stockings, and in all the wild dreams of Papal infallibility. There is not much that I can bring myself now to say with any hope of success, but—let me repeat the words used by Sir Robert Peel once,—‘If I am compelled to determine whether I shall give my allegiance to Queen Victoria, or to a mere mockery king of Munster, I ask no time for reflection; my determination is made.’" The men of Clanmarina stood silent as the grave, struck with a sense of their own humiliated condition in being

the mere puppets of a priesthood forced to riot against those who were as their hearts told them, in sober truth, their best friends; but the Irish priests and strangers backed by Fathers Eustace and O'Connell now became more frightfully violent than before. One man threw a large stone at Robert, which struck him next the ear, and produced a deep cut, from which the blood flowed in torrents; and another rioter was about to follow his example, when he was felled to the earth by the still powerful arm of M^cRonald. The affray which followed passes all description; but the two priests, stooping low to avoid the shower of stones that flew like a hailstorm over their heads, fled in trembling safety from the fearful tempest they had raised. When Robert Carre, after fighting his way from the hustings, and being rendered insensible by the blow of a bludgeon on his head, next awoke to consciousness, he was stretched on a bed in the neat tidy cottage of Mrs. M^cRonald. His aching forehead was swathed in linen, his broken arm under process of being set by Dr. McIndre, and a warrant was already served upon him for having been out in a riot."

"The jury can hardly bring in a verdict of wilful murder," said M^cRonald, anxiously, "as nobody has been murdered; but there will probably be three days' imprisonment for the Papists, and three months for us. Father Eustace has taken his oath that not a single Popish stone was thrown, and Robert Carre is strongly suspected of

having broken his own arm, and flung brick-bats at himself."

As Dr. M^cIndre performed all the necessary operations for reducing the injured arm, Bessie stood by the bedside of the endangered sufferer, holding the bandages in her trembling hands, while her wasted but still very beautiful countenance presented a mournful image of most agonized woe—

" Ah ! Grief hath changed me since you saw me last,
And careful hours, with woe's deforming hand,
Have written strange defeatures in my face."—*Shakspeare*.

Robert Carre looked at Bessie through his half-closed eyes, and after some weeks could have rejoiced at any suffering that had brought them thus together again. He had been at a loss to know what was now her state of mind in respect to religion, and without an assurance that her whole heart was turned from Romanism, he had no wish to trust his often-tried feelings by ever again under any circumstances meeting her. Bessie was herself too conscious of her own deep offences against the lover of her girlhood ever again to throw herself voluntarily in his way; but now in the small cottage of Mrs. M^cRonald, where Dr. M^cIndre often desired the door to be left open for air, Robert could observe his still beloved Bessie in the little cottage parlour engaged in the busy routine of all her daily occupations.

In the morning, with his eyes apparently closed, he watched her, as she read her Bible, and taught

her step-mother's children their simple prayers, and as she uncomplainingly bore all the irritating impatiences of the stern and passionate Mrs. M^cRonald. He saw Bessie in a sensible gingham dress, and tidy white apron, baking and churning, sewing, washing, and starching, day after day, with ceaseless industry, though with habitual sadness stamped indelibly upon her young face; and at night, when all the work of the house was done, she began arranging little tracts, school tickets, and children's prizes, or gently enticing the very irritable Mrs. M^cRonald to unite with her in prayers of thankfulness for all the unnumbered blessings they had enjoyed throughout the day. It was very difficult to convince Mrs. M^cRonald that she had any cause to be thankful for anything. Whatever good befel her was a matter of course, but whatever went contrary to her wishes was considered a positive injury, at which she felt it a relief and indispensable privilege to grumble. Every mortal living she thought ten thousand times better off than herself, and she was an implicit believer in everybody's perfect happiness but her own. Her envious nature had no idea how many hearts are broiling under a veil of smiles, and Mrs. M^cRonald was unable as she was unwilling to believe that a living being was as superlatively unfortunate as herself. There is a sort of melancholy distinction in being the most miserable of women, and Mrs. M^cRonald had mentally promoted herself to that position: but the first and foremost pretext for peevish lamentation which

she allowed herself to indulge in grumbling at was the dissolution of Bessie's engagement to Robert Carre. Nothing could induce the matter-of-fact step-mother to credit that Bessie had not been first jilted by her lover, and then attempted to cover her retreat by giving up the world in disconsolate grief which she was too proud to acknowledge. There are people who, when they have once believed anything, will never unbelieve it again, and Mrs. M^c Ronald was one.

"You'll never persuade me, Bessie," she said, dusting the chairs one morning, and vehemently rubbing down her only table, "that a girl like you would prefer a solitary cellar like the coal-hole, —sitting with your eyes fixed on the wall for a week, till your mind became as blind as your body, and living on mouldy bread and water—to a respectable, well-put-on home, and a pious, excellent, industrious husband at Daisybank. Such a farm! ninety cows; and the Carres make a cheese a-day—three hundred and sixty-five cheeses every year. I never heard what Robert does with the Sunday's milk; but surely they don't make a cheese on Sunday; yet I am positively assured, and no mistake, that they have one for every day of the year."

"Be easy on that point," said Bessie with a smile, followed by a deep sigh; "the Carres, old and young, were always good religious people, and most of the milk you are anxious about is distributed that day among their poor labourers' families."

"Such extravagance! Well, these people who set themselves up for being better than anybody, are sometimes, after all, ten times worse. To think of Robert behaving so shamefully to you!"

"Hush, mother, he is in the next room! You are quite mistaken, I assure you."

"Yes, of course, I am always mistaken in your eyes; but the mill-stone to be seen through had a hole in it, that I soon discovered. Girls are too proud to confess that they have been jilted; but trust me for knowing the world. You never would have buried yourself alive to please an old Popish priest, if Robert had been faithful to you. It must have been his fault, and now that he is up and dressed for the first time to-day, if I do not soon hunt him out of my house and give him a piece of my mind as to his cruel and disgraceful wickedness in jilting you, my name is not Janet McRonald."

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Bessie, clasping Mrs. McRonald's arm in real distress, "believe me——"

"Believe a fiddle-stick!" replied Mrs. McRonald, vehemently. "There was something in that whole business I never could rightly understand, and that you never very clearly explained; but I have a bad opinion of Robert's conduct in the whole upshot, and nothing can alter it. The sooner he picks himself up and leaves my house, now he is out of his bed, the better, for I never could abide a jilt, man or woman. Do you think, Bessie, if your father had jilted me that I would ever have

humbled myself to tell on him? But your altered face is enough for me; you are dying by inches, girl, and it is Robert's fault."

"Mother," said Bessie, with a look of anguish which no pen could describe, in her emaciated but still lovely features, "you see, then, that nothing short of death could have made such a change on me, and that I am dying! It is all caused by self-reproach. Do not add to the burden which I am scarcely able to bear, and live another day. Never did man behave to a woman better than Robert behaved to me, and never did any woman behave worse than I did to Robert. My only comfort is that I meant well, but was deceived. Oh, how deceived, none can ever know!—and now I have before me a life-time of repentance. It shall not be an idle sorrow, mother. While power is given me to move, I shall work for you and yours. I shall live, with a broken heart, for others, when I have not a hope left for myself."

Bessie, looking beautiful in her sorrow, sat down on the nearest chair, and covering her face with her hands, burst into a fit of hysterical weeping, so bitter and desolate, that even Mrs. McRonald stood for some moments aghast with dismay, and with something very like pity; but after a few exceedingly rough attempts at consolation, which only increased Bessie's sufferings, she did the best that could be done, by leaving her alone to her sorrow.

The flood-gates of grief once opened, Bessie felt a melancholy relief in venturing on what she very

seldom did, to look back upon the heart breaking past. In general now she lived from hour to hour in the drudgery of her daily work, but could not bear a thought of what might have been her happy fate; but this day the temptation was not to be resisted, and taking out a lock of Robert's hair, with which in all her former delirium she had never been able to part, she gazed at it through blinding tears; and many a convulsive sob gave utterance to her grief, as she once more pressed it to her lips.

"So you still kept that, Bessie," said a voice trembling with emotion behind her; and looking round she started, and her eyes could scarcely believe their own evidence when she saw Robert standing by her side, his colour raised, his lip quivering, and his eyes glittering with almost feverish agitation. Robert instantly drew from a case in his hand, one long and glossy ringlet of Bessie's hair; and smilingly held it up before her tearful eyes, saying in accents of mournful tenderness, "Since the day we exchanged these in the hayfield, Bessie, three miserable months have passed over us both. It would be difficult to say which has suffered most. The fault was not yours, you well-meaning little dupe, but his who misled you. Bessie! shall we forget everything that has passed, since you and I, then the two happiest people in the world, exchanged these gifts, and shall we fancy that the hour when we did so was only yesterday?"

"Robert! dear, generous Robert!" exclaimed

Bessie, while fresh tears gushed into her eyes, "If a lifetime of gratitude could reward you——"

"It can, Bessie,—I am already more than rewarded," said young Carre, looking smilingly and fondly at the agitated countenance of Bessie, now glowing with emotion. "And I hope the lifetime may be a long and happy one to us both. Only now let us lose no time in beginning it, as life is too short for any more delays."

The most beautiful rural festival that ever was seen in Scotland, took place at Clanmarina on Thursday last. The entire village seemed covered with flags and flowers, and the entire population were assembled in their holiday dresses,—the sun shone, the birds sang, the children hurra'd. There were hogsheads of porter, and barrels of ale, oxen roasted whole, dancing on the village-green, and bonfires blazing on every eminence. It was the wedding-day of the three happiest couples in Britain; and long may their happiness last, for it is founded on an enlightened obedience to God, and charity to man!

The happy couples looked all so young, that it seemed as if a party of boys and girls were playing at matrimony! Each bridegroom called himself the happiest of men, and felt himself so; while each bride resolved in her heart, that through coming years his utmost hopes should be fulfilled by finding her the best of wives: while Lady Anne, amidst a thousand home feelings and pleasant duties, looks back now with wonder at her former infatuation. "Lady Edith," she said, before

taking a tearful leave of her friendly hostess, "Your advice and example have rescued me from being ensnared, and with my whole heart I thank you."

"Dear Lady Anne! it is the pleasantest privilege of age, when our experience can serve the young friends we love, and I cannot look on in silence, when girls like yourself, or poor Bessie, are misled. If an old veteran soldier saw a youth in whom he felt interested, about to enlist in the army, because dazzled by the magnificent dress, and still more magnificent promises of a recruiting officer, might he not feel entitled to warn him against rashly engaging in that, of which he did not know the end? Perhaps his young favourite might reply to every well-meant caution, 'You are quite mistaken! I know all! I was once at a review, and approved of it extremely. There was nothing I did not like. The music was delightful, and this friendly officer assures me that the discipline is a mere nothing. I have only to walk out of the regiment any day, if I tire, for he tells me that those absurd stories are perfectly obsolete now about men being shut up in a black hole, or flogged, or about their being shot for desertion. All is made perfectly easy now, for my friend here tells me I may have an assistant to carry my gun, whenever I feel fatigued; that I need attend drill only when it suits me; and that I shall never be sent abroad.' When I see girls plunging headlong into ruin, I always think what a clever recruiting officer has enlisted

them ; and wishing well to all young people, I feel an ardent desire,—oh, how ardent !—to lift up for them the very long black veil that is thrown over the realities of conventual life.”

Sir Allan, awakened now to a consciousness of his high position, felt a new estimate of his high duties, and never more so than on the day of his joyful wedding. Flags, bearing his colours of crimson and yellow, were displayed in every crowded window at Clanmarina, and in the surrounding country, which blazed with bonfires. There were ceaseless cheers, with the waving of handkerchiefs, and an enthusiastic crowd : each man wearing a cockade in his hat of his colours, crimson and gold. Taking the horses from his carriage, the clansmen drew him, with his lovely bride, along the approach, the bagpipes playing “ McAlpine’s Gathering,” and the banners of the clan fluttering brightly in the sunshine. The Eaglescairn tenantry flocked also round the church ; and, in honour of a Protestant landlord, came for once without being preceded by the wooden images of St. Anthony and St. Bridget, while the absence of Father Eustace contributed more than anything to the general hilarity.

Robert and Bessie retired to Daisysbank, and Sir Allan and Lady Anne to Cairngorum Castle, drawn by the usual four prancing grey horses, which seem to make a point of being always on the spot everywhere for a marriage excursion. The Eaglescairns proceeded to what had once seemed as gloomy a residence as the Castle of Otranto ; but

now every window was illuminated, and gay flags waving on the tower. As Beatrice entered the splendid hall of Eaglescairn, brilliantly lighted, and filled with servants and retainers, the house-keeper, according to ancient Scottish custom, advanced to the door, and broke a large cake over her head, the fragments of which were scrambled for, with a desperation of eagerness only comparable to that of the Californian diggers; and during the *melée*, she quietly escaped into the solitary drawing-room, in which so many scenes and circumstances had already occurred to her, of pleasure and pain.

"Miss Turton," said Lord Eaglescairn, when he met her yesterday, "why do you not follow the general fashion of our matrimonial neighbourhood? There is that good, worthy pill-box, Dr. M^cIndre, for ever playing at backgammon with you, and much in want of exactly such a wife as yourself to keep his model villa cheerful, and to keep him and all his papers in order."

"To be perfectly honest, Lord Eaglescairn,—which is perhaps the best policy,—I will tell you the plain truth; for I believe you to be thoroughly kind-hearted, though fond of taking your hit at me when you can. If Dr. M^cIndre, six months ago, had wanted a wife, to mix his toddy, to dry his spectacles, to air his newspaper, and to listen patiently when he grumbled about his rheumatism and the bad times, I should have been only too happy then to accept him. But not now. I voluntarily took upon me very solemn vows, and our

Protestant consciences cannot break an oath, even with heretics. I refused Dr. McIndre yesterday, because I have been once actually a professed nun, which Bessie never became. I do not deny that it is with great regret I take upon myself the penalty of my mistake, as the worthy Doctor and I might have grown old very comfortably over our tea and backgammon together."

Dr. McIndre has often told me," observed Lord Eaglescairn, "that his chief dread of marrying arose from the trouble of finding a wife, and the fracas of trousseaux and cakes, bonfires and congratulations; but that if he could any fine day see any lady settled at her work in his drawing-room, beside a cheerful fire, and be told that this was Mrs. McIndre actually arrived, he would be delighted to welcome so pleasant a companion to break his solitude; therefore, only think, Miss Turton, how agreeably surprised he may yet be, if you were to relent. Get a dispensation from the Pope. He will sell you one for ten pounds."

"No, no, I have had enough of such buying and selling. In reference to whatever sins any one may wish to commit, the Pope so unreservedly selling indulgences, might be compared to the man in front of a booth at Greenwich fair, who points to his wares, calling out incessantly, 'Pay your money, and take your choice!' But one thing let me mention, Lord Eaglescairn. You will see no more of Father Eustace in this neighbourhood for ever and ever, as I have a letter from a friend in Italy, to tell me on undoubted authority,

that he is to receive from Rome next week a diploma, which constitutes Father Eustace possessor of a new dignity, unsanctioned by law, but not the less magnificent in mere sound: 'The Cardinal Archbishop of Edinburgh and Glasgow, Primus of Scotland,' &c.

"We shall next hear, 'The Lord High Rabbi of Dublin,' or the 'Grand Llama of Belgravia,'" said Lord Eaglescairn, indignantly. "These titles would probably take with some excitable minds prodigiously. In the case of Father Eustace, we may be sure that humility will not be one of his cardinal virtues! He is to be enthroned, I hear, with a degree of splendour that the Pope himself might envy, and his first levee is to be held at the Music Hall next Tuesday. The effect of the red hat and stockings upon the minds of imaginative young people is said to be immense."

"No doubt of that," replied Miss Turton with a mournful smile. "Though I used without emotion to see the wax figure of Cardinal Wolsey at Madame Tussaud's in full costume, yet the same scarlet finery on a living individual produced such an effect always on me, that I could not refuse to pay the wearer that more than royal homage, which he evidently expected. The ladies are expected to kiss the Cardinal's hands now, while the clergymen kneel."

"A subscription is going on already to raise funds for a magnificent new Popish Cathedral, to be used at Edinburgh in the meanwhile, till his Eminence gets possession of St. Giles, and the

collection already amounts to 1*l.* 1*s.* ;” added Lord Eaglescairn. “ All young people who have quarrelled with their families, or older people who have quarrelled with the world, and all of any description who own estates or property which they cannot enjoy themselves, or use for others, are requested immediately to give up their whole possessions, and be received into the nearest monastery.”

“ I hear that a Retreat is about to be opened immediately in Charlotte Square, by Mrs. Lorraine,” said Lady Anne. “ Not an absolute nunnery, but in a half-and-half state, where a full-dress rehearsal is allowed to young candidates for the veil, who retire there to ascertain how they like to play at monks and nuns. The whole affair is to be made as agreeable to them as novelty, romance and flattery can render such a life, till they are enticed onwards to take the irrevocable vows, and after that the curtain drops for ever. This institution skilfully managed by Mrs. Lorraine, is under the special direction of that distinguished individual, now daily expected in scarlet from Rome—

“ THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF EDINBURGH AND
GLASGOW.”

THE END.

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